

Robert Aitken

Information, blog, books, writings, and less.

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010

✉ Eido Tai Shimano Roshi

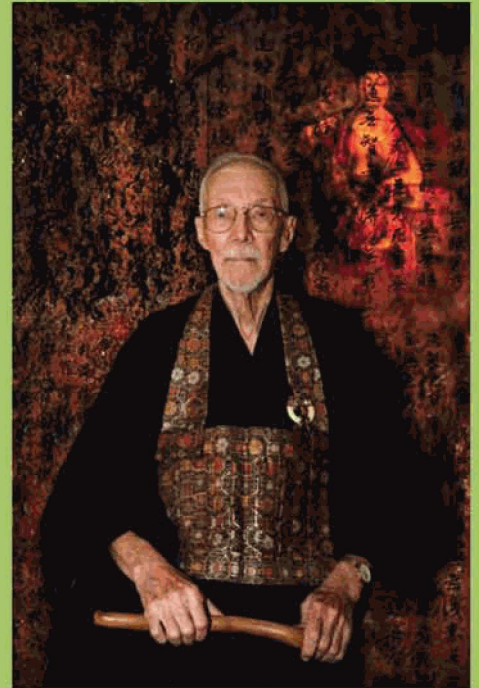
This is an open letter to Eido Tai Shimano Roshi:

Dear Tai San,

There are many reports of your abuse of women published on the web which indicate that you have been involved in breaking the precepts over a period of more than 40 years. I would like to urge you to come forth and make a statement in response to these accusations.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Aitken



Posted by tom8 at [9:32 PM](#) [M](#) [e](#) [t](#) [f](#) [s](#)

362 comments:

genkaku said...

I for one would like to support this suggestion. With mixed emotions, I have been complicit in this effort (<http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/2010/02/eido-tai-shimano.html>) and readily acknowledge the icky and somewhat off-topic nature of the revelations so inescapably woven into a Zen practice beloved by many.

But I think that a Zen practice without honesty is like a car without tires ... it ain't goin' nowhere, no matter how shiny it looks.

May 21, 2010 7:38 AM

Tai said...

I'm sorry, Goddammit!

It was all that breath counting, it drove me nuts.

Cordially yours,

TS.

May 21, 2010 5:32 PM

Mary / GoodlifeZEN said...

Wow! It's a big step to challenge a colleague publicly, Roshi. Well, I think on the whole it's good to bring the issue of Zen teachers abusing students out into the open.

I'm slow to rise to anger, but when senior students of disgraced teachers tell me that what their teacher did to female students was actually a "teaching that the unenlightened women somehow didn't understand", I tend to give them a tongue lashing they don't easily forget ...

Good on you, Roshi!

palm to palm
Mary

May 21, 2010 8:37 PM

Ted Biringer said...

Dear Aitken Roshi,

In considering how to help those the sick abusers, I also wonder how to help their victims.

The classic literature is not shy about condemning deluded, or harmful teachers. Zen texts are full of laments about students "misled" or "exploited" by false teachers. Obvious to those paying attention, students are still being misled and exploited.

Many Buddhist leaders have failed (or waited too long) to speak up, though there have been positive moves in recent years.

While deluded and exploitive "teachers" deserve compassion and help, we also need to be more aggressive in helping students avoid being victimized in the first place. Buddhist leaders could help reduce the problem by:

1. When leaders become aware of deluded or harmful teachers--stand up and speak out.
2. Assertively encourage students to become familiar with the classic literature (sutras, shastras, Zen records etc.). When a teacher's words/deeds diverge widely from the classic texts they can move along. The knowledge of too many students based almost entirely on contemporary writings.
3. Talk and write about the meaning and nature of "enlightenment." Because of its "overstated" position in the early decades of transmission to the west, the term has largely dropped out of the conversation. "Enlightenment" is often substituted with "practice" (even when it is not accurate), avoided, or denigrated. I often hear it referred to as "The 'E' word...", as if the mere mention of it will cause the "Stink of Zen" to permeate one's being. Consequently, the condition the term denotes is obscure to students, mysterious, even superstitious. Unfamiliar with its meaning, students do not know how it applies to the reliability of teachers.

"Teachers" that lead students astray from the path due to their own delusion may be as harmful as "teachers" that sexually and financially exploit students. Both have potential to cause genuine students to turn away from the path-- and thus liberation.

Finally, from the classics:

When I was journeying, I didn't choose communities on the basis of whether or not they had material provisions; I was only concerned with seeing whether their perception indicated some capacity. If so, then I might stay for a summer or a winter; but if they were low-minded, I'd leave in two or three days. Although I called on more than sixty prominent teachers, barely one or two had great perception. The rest hardly had real true knowledge—they just want your donations.

Teachings of Zen, Thomas Cleary

[students who were] genuinely seeking to study the Way ...were unfortunately being led astray by some false teacher so that the correct understanding of the Truth was needlessly being kept from them.

Shobogenzo, Bendowa, Rev. Hubert Nearman

There are people who teach living beings for the sake of fame and profit, without comprehending the characteristics of the ultimate Dharma. They do not recognize relative degrees of depth and shallowness in [their pupils'] capacities and causal affinities. They give their seal of approval to everyone, to people who seem enlightened but are otherwise. This is most painful! It is a great disaster! Whenever someone seems illuminated and pure in their perception of mind, they immediately give their approval. These people are gravely damaging the teaching of enlightenment: they are deceiving themselves and deceiving others. People who use mind with such divergences [from the Correct Path] and present this appearance have not found Mind.
Teachings of Zen, Thomas Cleary

Peace,
Ted

May 22, 2010 3:43 AM

Marian said...

Shimano is unworthy of trust and has done great harm. Thank you Roshi for calling him to account. Will supporters around him at his center take action to stop him? Who will protect the unwary who are taken in by all the trappings? To the former students and associates who are speaking out now: keep on, and thank you.

Marian

May 22, 2010 2:45 PM

Anonymous said...

What excuse can justify remaining a student of such a man? My conclusion, the search for validation and credentials has replaced the search for Dharma. Titles bought and sold all in the name of Zen. The abuse has never been limited to just sexual, nor to just women.

May 22, 2010 5:27 PM

Anonymous said...

It's interesting how gullible we are in the West - someone like Eido has "roshi" after their name, acts in a selfish and hurtful manner and yet people still go to that person for "training" or make excuses for this behaviour.

What a pity. Maybe in time we'll grow up.

May 24, 2010 2:56 PM

Anonymous said...

I wonder whether we are gleaning as much sustenance as we could from this ongoing chapter in the American Zen story. Is there not more here than the necessary condemnation of a teacher who has stepped perversely outside of his responsible position as a representative of the true dharma. That dharma includes the vagaries of the human condition, and teachers one and all carry with them the tendencies inherent in this condition which we all share. Might we not look at how our practice exhorts the teacher and promotes this figurehead as a patriarchal source of the dharma who is beyond the human frailties that are so apparent in ourselves. What is this need to set this figurehead so high, to assume that the mythical is embodied in human form. Is it really that crucial to our own surrender? As practitioners who uphold our present structure of Zen we are to be held to account for who and what we support. This ongoing saga should illicit deeper contemplation if we aspire to have our practice grow and flower!

June 1, 2010 10:09 AM

Dr Brenda Shoshanna said...

Seems to me as though there is a total lack of forgiveness floating here. Is it honest to chant "To separate what we like from what we dislike is the disease of the mind", and continually harbor anger over the past? Is Eido Roshi the "only" Zen Master in our country who has crossed the line? Have these begged for forgiveness? What about all the treasures Eido Roshi has offered? Where is the recognition and appreciation for that? It seems to me a more constructive response, especially from Zen practitioners, would be to wonder how we could offer help and support, offer an open heart to Eido Roshi.
Eshin Brenda Shoshanna

June 6, 2010 6:02 AM

genkaku said...

"It seems to me a more constructive response, especially from Zen practitioners, would be to wonder how we could offer help and support, offer an open heart to Eido Roshi."

It is interesting to think that such open-hearted efforts had not in fact been made ... again and again and again and again and again over so many years. And interesting to inspect the ways in which Mr. Shimano has benefited again and again and again and again from those with open hearts. Even those who are not Zen students might agree that the treasure of the sangha is not something to manipulate or squander on twinkling tinsel.

Anger is something any of us might recognize in ourselves -- recognize and investigate. But just because anyone is angry does not mean they are implicitly mistaken. Being afraid of anger is like being afraid of love ... a sad state of affairs. Investigation of facts, rather than fancies, tends to put to rest both the quivers of anger and the warm-fuzzies of what passes for compassion.

June 6, 2010 2:56 PM

Professor F. Baggins said...

Please Doctor, do not assume that Eido Shimano is not forgiven, or that those who pursue the path of transparency are angry.

Separating what we like from what we dislike may be in one sense a “disease” of the mind. Nevertheless, when you go to buy fruit at the Korean’s don’t you examine your selections? Don’t we all separate what we like from what we dislike – all the time? Why does Mr. Shimano wear exorbitantly expensive gold brocade and not denim? Is not the castigation “there is a total lack of forgiveness floating here” something you dislike about others? Do you not imply that an abundance of “forgiveness” is preferable Doctor?

It is easy to castigate other people for failure to “forgive” – the words are easy any way. Is it not possible that Mr. Shimano is forgiven but not excused?

We may be faced with someone’s transgression that we forgive and move on – everything is fine. Later that person makes the same transgression, again we forgive and move on – everything is fine. Even further down the line the same situation arises... in time we begin to get the idea that we are dealing with a pattern and that perhaps forgiving and moving on is not doing either party any good. We might come to the conclusion that we are willing to forgive but that our forgiveness does not imply excusing and the abdication of responsibility. We are not faced with a situation so simple that we can just “forgive” and forget, to do so is Pollyannaish and an exercise in avoidance.

In order to forgive, by necessity we must first know what we are forgiving. Once we know, we need to progress through a process that may eventually bring us to being able to forgive, this takes time. It also involves insight, critical thinking, discriminating awareness, and for those personally invested – the ability to stand back from emotional attachment.

For many people, even long term followers of Eido Shimano, for decades there was no comprehension that there was anything to forgive. It was only very recently when the documentary material became publicly available that people were given the information needed to enable them to gain a clear perception of the nature of the problem. We can’t forgive what we don’t know.

Over the past forty-six years dozens and dozens of people in positions of power were aware of various situations and repeatedly, systematically obscured, suppressed, and deliberately kept the truth from students in close proximity to Mr. Shimano. This was done out of perhaps “good” intentions and perhaps equally out of fear that the truth would incur change in the status quo and threaten their own position in the eyes of Mr. Shimano and other students within the hierarchical structure of the organization. A thorough study of the available documents reveals that we are not faced with merely sexual misconduct in this case, nor are we faced with a single transgression or even

multiple transgressions in a short time frame. There are events and occurrences that indicate that deception and obfuscation are the *modi operandi* of the organization. Reading the archive necessitates asking questions about the “culture” of the organization, so we are faced with another layer that needs to be examined before we can really see things clearly and precisely as they are.

June 6, 2010 4:02 PM

Dr Brenda Shoshanna said...

Thank you for your thoughtful and wise response. To begin to respond, the hierarchy that you mention in the organization, those who were close to Eido Roshi was never a constant. Many, many left, sooner or later. Many tried to publicize these facts and undertook all kinds of action. And the zazen practice, our true teacher, that which we return to endlessly, went on and on.

Secondly, what you say about forgiveness is certainly valid on one level. We can forgive and also choose not to stay in a toxic situation, there is certainly wisdom to that. This kind of forgiveness is conditional based upon the individual's confession of wrong doing. . based upon the individual doing as we wish. And yet, to me, Zen practice goes beyond the practical, psychological response to our distress. There is also unconditional forgiveness available - a great act of love, in my view. This is the forgiveness offered by not being willing to focus upon the darkness in an individual. This does not mean not seeing it, but not making it primary, not making it all of who the person is. This is seeing beyond the personality into the core of who we all are. I believe it is similar to the forgiveness Christ offered and tried to teach. He said to the woman, "Go and sin no more." But if she did sin and returned, I believe he would have forgiven again. Perhaps the best way to describe this is to share what happened to me when I learned about Eido Roshi's affairs. It was three or four years after I'd been practicing at the NY Zendo, many years ago. I was shocked, stunned, couldn't eat or sleep for several days. Besides myself, I talked about it to a dear sangha member, Kushu, (no longer alive). We were up at Dai Bosatsu Mountain. I said to him, "How can this be? The Zen practice here is so profound, the zazen so powerful, the teisho's incredible...the dokusan piercing. I don't understand it. I loved Eido Roshi so much, and now this!!" Kushu's answer was very straightforward and simple. It changed my life. He said, "You only think you loved him. But you only loved your dreams about him. When you can see not just your dreams about a person, not just what you want him to be, but all of who he truly is, and still love him, then you're doing something! That's love." That became my life koan. I returned home from the mountain that day forever changed. That is my practice....to see everything about a person and still love and accept them. Eido Roshi has shown great, great patience with me, and with others. Our zazen practice is hard. We all fall down over and over. Doesn't he deserve great patience as well?

Deep, heartfelt gasshos to all,
Eshin Brenda Shoshanna

June 7, 2010 7:03 AM

tom8 said...

We have received an anonymous comment implicating another teacher as abusive. It is not our practice to publish such a comment without some substantiation. A link to reliable information would be helpful. Thank you for your understanding. -tom aitken

June 11, 2010 4:49 PM

borderglider said...

I am very grateful that Robert Aitken has chosen to speak out on this subject of sexual abuse - and the abuse of power by authority figures in the Zen community.

Many years ago I used to visit the San Francisco Zen Centre and listen to the public lectures given by Baker 'roshi' -which definitely inspired my interest in Zen practice. However, when I read about the long history of sexual abuse and the abuse of power which Baker had enacted over many years - I truly despaired for Zen in America.

Moral relativism has been the most destructive force of the last 50 years in the United States.

We all know that it is wrong for a school teacher, or a university teacher to have sex with his students, because it is an abuse of power - of one in authority over a weaker person.

The Buddha's teaching, as I understand it, had no doubts about moral and ethical precepts, which is exactly why rules of conduct for monks and nuns were laid down and followed over many centuries.

Sex is dynamite - and sexual abuse ruins lives, causes jealousy, suicide and even murder.

The unethical and immoral behaviour of religious authority figures is not confined to Buddhism. Far, far worse sexual abuse has been enacted in the Catholic and Protestant churches of Europe and America - where priests have raped thousands of little children over many decades.

Jesus, in response to a question about 'forgiveness' said that God would forgive all sins, but for anyone who abused a child and turned him away from God - there would be no forgiveness. I think the exact quote is where Jesus said: "It would be better for such a man to tie a millstone around his neck and throw himself into the deepest abyss".

Until the American Buddhist community cleans the shit out of the stables - the stench will continue to pollute all its Zentos.

Deep thanks to Robert Aitken for speaking out.

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." (Robert Burke)

Graham
Scotland

June 18, 2010 4:13 PM

Anonymous said...

I first went to NY zendo on 67th Street 35 years ago. After the first years there, I began to hear the stories about the Roshi. I had left another Eastern religion organization because of their lusty attachment to purity, so, at first, these stories did not bother me. I accepted it. I must say, I was young, and did not view it then as abuse. Though it was easy to see many did and actively campaigned to do something about it. Years later, sitting in on a board of directors vote to remove the Roshi--the majority voted not to. We went out to dinner and toasted, "we won". I feel bad when reading the recent letters posted on line of women who became involved with the Roshi when they had expected spiritual counseling, mature guidance in their zazen practice, and not, manipulation for sexual pleasure. And then told to lie and deceive others so that the pleasure could continue. And then all the anguish that results from this, the pain and confusion. Surely not the Buddhas way. Can anything good come of this? Did anything good come of this? The Rosh's legacy will not be a thriving community of monks and nuns dedicated to the propagation of the Budhha Dharma--which it could of been had this weakness not controlled his entire life, for they were many, inspiring and committed people that made up NY zendo and DBZ. Its my hope he will speak to this issue if his pride will let him. Let us pray.

June 30, 2010 7:23 PM

Anonymous said...

In response to the pressure of the current publications on the internet, The Zen Studies Society has published an "updated" version of their "ethical guidelines" beginning with The Ten Precepts on their website.

There is nothing new or "updated" about the Precepts... and these have been ignored, even laughed at and treated as "simpleminded" by Shimano for decades. His public teaching, "There are no morals in Zen" is a prime example. The Precepts, particularly "refrain from sexual misconduct" and "honor honesty and truth," have been macerated by Shimano throughout his career. There is little hope that posting some list of "guidelines," even with a lawyer's input in the drafting process, is going to somehow "fix it" and make "it all better now." The guidelines did not stop a Shimano Dharma heir not long ago from convincing a woman to leave her husband and small children to become his "student" and relocate to Dai Bosatsu, nor did they stop him from initiating a sexual liaison with the woman while in residence at DBZ.

The "updated" guidelines state that, "The Zen Studies Society is a community based on trust and respect." This has historically not been the case at all, as the Shimano Archives amply illustrate. The reality has always been that students are expected to trust and respect Shimano and by extension, his wife, but that trust and respect has never been reciprocated. Students have always been considered "expendable" and the road to Dai Bosatsu Zendo is lined with the "bodies" of good and dedicated people unceremoniously discarded by Mr. Shimano. Mistrust, even paranoia has emanated from the Shimanos as can be seen in the archived documents. We need to bear in mind that there are orders of magnitude of anecdotal information available from former ZSS people illustrating the toxic culture of the organization that do not appear in public, as these observations are not substantiated by documentary evidence.

Given the history of the organizational culture of ZSS, it is difficult to imagine that any internal "committee" could be capable of impartiality, particularly in dealing with the transgressions of Mr. Shimano. The degree of absolute control of the ZSS Board of Directors that has been constantly maintained by Shimano and his wife for over forty years, is the primary root of the inherent dysfunctionality of the organization. Putting "ethical guidelines" into place under these circumstances is the equivalent of treating a deep abdominal knife wound with a band-aid or closing the barn door after the horse has escaped.

July 2, 2010 3:02 AM

Anonymous said...

...and the "Updated Guidelines" of the Zen Studies Society are unclear about whether the process would address complaints against Eido Tai Shimano for events prior to June 2010. It seems that the only way the Zen Studies Society can correct its mishandling of past allegations is to allow a full investigation by a widely well-respected independent individual or group. Without that, this appears to be more of the same.

July 3, 2010 6:40 AM

Anonymous said...

Whatever "full investigation" is conducted needs to be transparent, i.e. the results must be made public. The organizational culture is founded on deception, silence and opacity, so there is an inertial tendency to continue on such a course.

There is no way to know if Mr. Shimano is even aware of the public postings of historical records and the on-going dialog taking place on the internet. It is possible that the ZSS Board and senior staff is deliberately keeping this information from Shimano for whatever misguided reasons. He does not go online himself, has no understanding of the Internet and his snail mail is likely being intercepted. It would be very easy for those in his inner circle to keep hiding the truth from him.

There is no way that this can be successful in the long run, sooner or later he will find out, some student will clue him in or ask questions that will reveal the truth.

July 4, 2010 2:53 AM

Anonymous said...

This post has been removed by a blog administrator.

July 6, 2010 11:30 AM

Anonymous said...

The following just appeared on the Genkaku Again blog: (<http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/2010/02/eido-tai-shimano.html>)

Anonymous said...

The international community of practitioners should be aware that the abuse at Dai Bosatsu Zendo is far from over. Barely two weeks ago, a young woman admitted to a two year long affair with Shimano. She was unaware of his long history of sexual misconduct. Shimano was just about to release a public statement addressing past allegations of misconduct and say that no sexual misdeeds had been committed on his part for almost 20 years. Then, this woman spoke up and told her story. Shimano has not denied this affair. The community is attempting to "retire" him. He refuses to step down. What will be done? Will this be covered up again? How many more women are to be exploited? Who else will be complicit in this half-century lie?

July 7, 2010 12:51 AM

Anonymous said...

So, assuming there is a two-year affair - it had to take place at Dai Bosatsu. Are people supposed to wonder how such an arrangement could have possibly gone un-noticed by the DBZ staff? The operational staff, jishas in particular, could have not possibly not noticed that Shimano was involved in an affair. The DBZ culture dictates that The Roshi is granted the ultimate in "respect." So staff members not reporting an on-going relationship between Shimano and a young student while being respectful of "the Roshi's privacy" would be complicit and enabling in his expressly forbidden philandering in direct conflict with the ethical guidelines.

This is the bind the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors now finds itself in, they are stuck in an organizational culture that has enabled Eido Roshi's misconduct and lies for four decades and now that some transparency and clarity has ascended they are faced with having to publicly "fire" Eido Roshi. It is doubtful that this will be in any way "graceful" it is likely to prove "disgraceful," particularly for Eido Shimano.

Then again, he could just send them all away – and sit by himself until a new batch shows up, and begin creating his narcissistic “mandala” myths all over again. Board members can’t vote him out if they aren’t Board Members any more. The hell with the American people, DBZ is Eido Shimano’s private playground, it even has a very expensive dress-up box. “I’m the teacher - it’s my way or the highway.”

July 8, 2010 4:02 AM

Anonymous said...

It's not too late for Eido Roshi to publicly repent and acknowledge that, though there may be no morals in Zen, deceiving others in daily life so that one can manipulate his students for pleasure has without a doubt led to harm, ill-will, and suffering for the many involved. He must see this. Acknowledge this! As the cart follows the horse, this kind of behavior resulted in what is now DBZ. The board needs to compassionately coerce him into a making a public confession. Or else have him kindly retire, for the benefit of the Dharma in the West. At first, such a confession will feel disgraceful and the Roshi will lose face. But much good will come of such action down the road, for the Roshi, the Sangha and the Dharma

July 8, 2010 12:20 PM

Anonymous said...

He already did that in '93. He did a public “confession” in a Zendo packed with people fresh off the street and a hand selected group of senior students. He droned on for forty-minutes, apologizing and swearing that it would never happen again. Throughout his “apology” his wife wailed in the background. In the entire performance, he never once stated what he was apologizing for.... More of this sort of charade is not needed.

July 8, 2010 3:10 PM

Anonymous said...

Not very public or apologetic, though i'm sure there were some real pathos present that evening, especially for Aiho. What would be more appropriate is coming out and speaking about this weakness of his, as, what he must know by now, is an addiction. Being seducer of women. Like so many others before him and presently, I don't feel he intends to harm women he picks up, in his case, in the dokusan room--it's probably more akin to him imagining these women as reincarnated dakshinis sent by the buddhas to relieve him of the drudgery of being a god. Beyond social rules and regulations, especially those of so-called religion, the precious precepts. A liar and a seducer of women what a legacy for a man of the cloth...But I'm a believer of third fourth and fifth, acts, especially in America. Long live redemption and liberty!!!

Maybe its just a weakness

July 8, 2010 4:47 PM

bill lehman said...

How cowardly to post under Anonymous. If you have strong feelings that should be read by others, state your feelings openly. My own belief is that each zen student is responsible for himself or herself, not the sangha.

I am not a formal zen student, but am associated with ZSS, and it saddens me to see good and sincere people hide behind pseudonyms or "anonymous". Are you afraid that we will think you have other, more personal motives?

-Bill Lehman

July 9, 2010 6:56 AM

Anonymous said...

What he did in '93 does not sound like a public confession what with, as you say, a select group of students and strangers off the street. What I think he needs to do is a full-on admission in writing addressed to the buddhist sangha specifically stating in effect, his life-long helplessness in managing his desires in pursuit of sensual pleasures, and the manipulation and deceit a life-time of this uncontrollable affinity naturally would involve. But I am doubtful his samarai pride will allow him to face up to this and the necessary action it would take to resolve the disease/entrenched pattern of behavior. But it would have a positive effect on the buddhist sangha if he could address his issues in writing, which I think Aiken Roshi initially is asking of him. Aiken Roshi we recently learn had assessed much of Eido's problem fairly accurately, it seems to me, with the help of mental health professionals, over 45 years ago. And he still seeks some kind of rebuttal from Tai san, to no effect. It seems sad to think of you Roshi, in your frail health, still wanting some words from Tai san on this issue. I hope he will respond to you publicly or privately in some manner, and not like he did 46 years ago, refuse "to come up" to talk to you, instead, leaving for the mainland without word.

July 9, 2010 3:27 PM

john said...

Hey Bill Lehmann, speak to the issues, don't worry about who is saying them. That fact the I choose not to reveal my name does not effect what i have to say. I fear nothing from ZSS. I have no problem with anyone choosing to be unknown. It is what they are saying about this specific issue I'm interested in learning not their ID. If you are a connected to ZSS, what is the climate there now? How are members handling this recent revelation about the Roshi? Of course, you can ignore this question, but I'm sure many people would like to know.

July 9, 2010 4:23 PM

shusan said...

I have been following these issues for some years, as a Zen practitioner in various sanghas for two decades in myriad traditions (not in Shimano's however.)

Having read each of the recently revealed documents from the Aitken archive pertaining to Shimano, the case is simply unequivocal. Shimano should be fired and sanctioned, whether or not he says a word in defense or apology. Aitken is right - he has broken the precepts for 40 years - and not in an inconsequential manner.

Other teachers have had sex with students and caused controversy, but none to the extent and scale of Shimano (Baker is not even in the same league) - and still there has not been a sufficient response from any media, much less Buddhist oriented: where are Tricycle, Buddha Dharma, or Shambhala Sun? Shimano may not even be an authentic lineage holder. Controversy pervades this man from stem to stern, and there is plenty of evidence to be pursued.

Aitken waited far too long to make a vocal enough response. I only hope that we are less blinded today by cultural intimidation and cowed subservience to Eastern "inscrutability" - this was understandable amongst our elders, but I hope subsequent generations, to which I belong, are less prone to allowing for this kind of total abuse of power.

We can question teachers and traditions and still remain respectful. THAT is a particular challenge for Americans, or maybe just modern people - it now seems almost mandated that critics rave and rant like maniacs, in any context. It is all the more sad when you see Buddhists act this way.

Of course Shimano is not evil. Of course he deserves compassion fundamentally. But this should not be mistaken for simple inaction; for "well, his talks worked for me, so I can't judge". This is the most grotesque kind of selfishness - to allow systematic, decades-long abuse to go unchecked because one gains some sort of "spiritual satisfaction" from the perpetrator? That's really sort of the most disgusting affront of all.

I think we know a tree from its fruit - if Jun Po Kelly is an indicator of where this particular branch is going, we can simply choose any of the myriad other more grounded and nourishing ones. We should take a good long time to choose our teachers, and the wise ones should make us cool our heels. As the Dalai Lama once said "charisma is not a spiritual quality."

July 11, 2010 3:10 PM

Anonymous said...

So go listen to Shimano's latest Dharma heir, Genjo Marinello's talk "Kanchiketsu."

<http://cdn2.libsyn.com/genjo/Kanshiketsu.m4a?nvb=20100712000329&nva=20100713001329&t=02858a8e168db0bdf067c>

July 11, 2010 5:13 PM

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna said...

"Do not look at the faults of others
Look at your own deeds, done and undone"
Buddha

All that happens is our teacher...by looking for a "perfect" teacher we are seeking an ideal that will reflect back to ourselves. Our zazen practice is not about Eido Roshi, it is not about Aitken Roshi, or what he did or did not say. Yes, appropriate action must be taken here, but action without compassion and love is not the fruit of zazen practice, but of the mind filled with rage. So many take any opportunity to let this rage and hate pour forth. How many know all the details of the situation? How many know what really happened, who these women were, or what went on between them? One may say it is unequivocally unacceptable to have sexual relationships with a student, (although many, many Zen teachers have) - I would agree that it is unfortunate, but it pains me greatly to see this level of hate turned towards Eido Roshi and to overlook the enormous kindness, wisdom and strength he has given over the years to all of us. Rather than put him on the executioner's block, let's extend an open hand.

July 11, 2010 5:23 PM

Jean said...

Histrionics are not helpful, seeking truth and justice does not equate with hate and rage. Nobody is calling for an execution, it's just time for change.

July 11, 2010 9:21 PM

shusan said...

Eshin-
you simply don't get it. The problem is not simply that he had sex - though a teacher should NEVER have sex with a student, period. This is a standard understanding and precept now, EVEN BY THE ZSS' own by temple rules.

The problem is the evidence of a pathological pattern of abuse of women who were simply not respectfully treated as (or even capable of being) equal partners, during relationships or after; and the lies perpetrated around these relationships, and the

psychological, emotional not to mention institutional damage that has been the result. Not to mention Shimano's complete apparent inability to stop.

Again, to say you simply got something good from him so everyone else can go hang is NOT skillful means or the posture of a bodhisattva. His gifts cannot be fully acknowledged until he is held accountable for his abuses and wrong doing.

July 12, 2010 10:29 AM

Anonymous said...

Eshin "Us", speak for yourself.

July 12, 2010 10:55 AM

Rob said...

A few comments about Eshin Brenda Shoshanna's latest post.

Quite frankly much of what she says sounds like transferring the blame for this whole discussion on those people that have concerns over Shimano's behavior.

Her comment about the "perfect" teacher. I don't detect any pie in the sky ideals being expressed about Zen teachers in other posts, or any expressions of shattered ideals. If the general story of Shimano's transgressions is to be believed, I think most feel it's reached a level (and a consistency of over 40 years) where commentary is due.

She also mentions rage and hate. Looking at the posts on this blog and following another discussion thread I don't see this rage and hate. Are there perhaps a few indelicate posts? I suspect there are, but the general tone I'm getting is that people have some real concerns, and they are quite articulate in expression with very little venom. Please show me the hate you see on this blog.

She says "One may say it is unequivocally unacceptable to have sexual relationships with a student, (although many, many Zen teachers have) - I would agree that it is unfortunate"

This is really a little off the mark and trivializes what is being discussed. The issues at hand are bit broader than this. This isn't a discussion about a Zen teacher having sex with a student. It's about a pattern of behavior where he abuses his teaching position by getting into frequent, short term relationships with female students. And further, the accusations suggest psychological manipulation and abuse (again, over a 40 year period). It's true, many of us don't really know what has happened, and I have no desire for the details. However, if over the years a group of Zen teachers have had the experience of hearing very similar stories from some ex-female students, it's reasonable for them to take notice. And I might add, reasonable for those teachers to take action. Also, there are other

students of his that have left over the years that corroborate the general story being disseminated.

And a final rebuttal to her words, "Rather than put him on the executioner's block, let's extend an open hand."

I really feel she uses language that is much too dramatic and inaccurate. Again, I don't see this attitude being expressed. There are people that have called for action, and many aren't even specific. I'm not after his head. I'm not after him to step down. That's for his community to deal with however they see fit. As gossipy as this can all get, I do think it is important to make the general story public, so others can be forewarned. Also, I get the impression there have been open hands extended in the past.

I see in Eshin Brenda Shoshanna's post a misrepresentation of most of the dialogue that I've seen, and definitely nothing like what is being written on this very blog.

July 12, 2010 4:09 PM

Anonymous said...

I would be interested at this point if folks are up to attempting to define what we mean by abuse. Is it the prosecutorial felonious kind of abuse? Then, why, like the victims at the hands of catholic priests have there not been any such cases like this with Eido if he has had so many victims. Surely one or two of them must of felt their rights were violated, or perhaps even molested, assaulted sexually? Like the recent case of Al Gore, for example. Or Roman Polanski? So why not make a legal case out of it. Is it because many or most of the women did not feel their rights were violated? Or maybe due to the delicate nature of their psyches such a course of action would not of been possible in the aftermath of the affairs? I ask this because I had known one or two of the women Eido had become involved with, and I didn't see them as abused or damaged.

Or is it the fact that he uses his teacher status, to seduce and manipulate? Is this what you mean by 'abuse'. Abuse of power of authority? Not prosecutorial or felonious, still abuse- -maybe even more hated for its lack of restraint for the one given the power. And if there are any women on this blog who've been involved with Eido and could anonymously talk about the nature of the 'abuse' they sustained, or lack of 'abuse'. Maybe a loving relationship while it lasted? But still abuse through the eyes of outsiders, I'm sure, because of how he uses his authoritative position to lord over and manipulate?

July 13, 2010 9:06 AM

Debbie said...

There are myriad sources for this information out there. One book in particular is of great value.

Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Men in Power – Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers and Others – Betray Women’s Trust

<http://www.amazon.com/Forbidden-Zone-Peter-Rutter-M-D/dp/0449147274>

July 13, 2010 10:33 AM

Daikan said...

@Rob

Your points are well made, I have read both blogs and find no rage and hate except for posts made by one of Shimano's "monks" named Ippo Keido on the genkaku again blog.

The posts are unbelievable, if this person is really a Dai Bosatsu monk, they have some very serious problems there:

<http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/2010/02/eido-tai-shimano.html?showComment=1278980531398#c5348913520905435305>

July 13, 2010 12:41 PM

shusan said...

This is bodhisattva action, to my eyes. Debbie, what an extraordinary point - this behavior has deep behavioral roots, in the very structures of power themselves. Daikan and Rob likewise bring in further evidence of the human need to defend a personal sense of belonging - sheer tribalism (which is not to impugn "first culture" brothers and sisters, who have much to teach us.)

To anonymous - if you need to understand specifically what abuses are being described and discussed, simply go to shimano archives (.com, .org?) We are not talking about consensual relationships by individuals playing as it were on an equal playing field. Shimano as teacher is always the authority. Over and over you see how he apparently "preys" on the weak.

The tough ones shrug him off and keep running, or "sitting" as the case may be. This is not a complex or nuanced hypothetical. This is not a "witch hunt." Shimano used his position to prey on women to satisfy his appetites - for sex, for power, for control, what have you. More than one psychiatric professional over four decades span said this guy should not be in a position of power, and that he has profound problems.

What exactly is the debate here?

July 13, 2010 4:19 PM

genkaku said...

It is hard to determine what it means in concrete, day-to-day, real-time fact, but I received this in email today:

<http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html>

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee. On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and Aiho-san Shimano, who served the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors for the past forty-two years, voluntarily stepped down from the board to facilitate a smooth transition of both temporal authority and spiritual legacy.

July 14, 2010 6:45 AM

genkaku said...

After some checking and the corroboration of two witnesses, I wrote this on Zen Forum International:

On July 13, 2010, the following was posted at Zen Studies Society

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee. On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and Aiho-san Shimano, who served the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors for the past forty-two years, voluntarily stepped down from the board to facilitate a smooth transition of both temporal authority and spiritual legacy.

By July 14, 2010, the text had been revised to read:

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. The present board has revised and posted the following Guidelines for Ethical Behavior, including a grievance procedure. The board is adamant that these guidelines be upheld. The board also wishes to begin a

process of reconciliation. If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee.

July 14, 2010 9:02 AM

Kobutsu Malone said...

I grabbed the HTML source code of the <http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html> page at 1:55 PM EDT on 07/14/10 and made it into a pdf file that is here:

http://www.hoodiemonks.org/PDF's/Shimano_Archive_Redacted/20100714_ZSS_Ethical.pdf

The line under discussion is line 49 (in grey) at the top of page 2 of the pdf. It begins with a “less than symbol” followed by an exclamation point and two dashes (this indicates the beginning of a “comment” that does not appear in the actual document). At the end of the invisible comment are two dashes followed by a “greater than symbol.”

This is what was “commented out”:

“On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi and Aiho-san Shimano, who served the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors for the past forty-two years, voluntarily stepped down from the board to facilitate a smooth transition of both temporal authority and spiritual legacy.”

July 14, 2010 11:50 AM

genkaku said...

Posted by Zen Studies Society:

"If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, please contact a member of the ethics committee."

1. The implication of this invitation is that those who may have felt badly-treated in the past can now trust that they will receive good treatment. But why should they assume that? Because it is written in a statement? From the point of view of those who may have felt misused or denigrated, which is more convincing -- a 40-year track record or a newly minted statement of concern?
2. Who is on the ethics committee and to what extent should those who feel wounded and discarded believe that these members are not now, as they have been in the past, Mr. Shimano's obedient surrogates?

3. Is it possible that an ombudsman -- probably someone from outside the Zen Studies Society framework -- could be engaged to hear both sides of the story and be granted the authority to mete out decisions and, possibly, penalties?

4. To what extent is the Ethics Committee serious in its promises and to what extent are their 'caring' assertions little more than a subterfuge exercised so effectively in the past?

5. I fear that without spelling things out in greater detail, what was posited as 'ethical' will simply devolve into more of the same old 'unethical.'

July 15, 2010 5:29 AM

Anonymous said...

How can those who were involved in previous "unsatisfactory" attempts to address these complaints now claim the ability to objectively process these complaints? They cannot. This "offer" to finally do the right thing is too little, too late. Have they no shame?

July 17, 2010 11:33 AM

Mitsu said...

Hi - a fascinating discussion. I don't happen to agree that students and teachers under all circumstances should never have sex, as someone posted a bit above. This may well be a very good guideline and perhaps even a good rule for many sanghas, but to my mind, sex between a Zen teacher and a student could be seen to be something like sex between an artist and one of his students or associates. We're shocked by one but not by the other, yet in both cases the situation is very similar in terms of power dynamic, charisma, and so on.

However, in this case there seems to be more going on than just sex between a teacher and student. Lying, manipulation, and so forth are obviously problems. However, the mere fact of sex between teacher and student (even if it was done over and over) shouldn't be the central issue; it should really be about the way in which it was done, in my view.

July 18, 2010 4:58 AM

Anonymous said...

what goes around comes around. and around again.

have you this shame you speak of, to say they now have none?

What is "objectivity" by the way.

They breathe the same air as I do. As do you.

July 18, 2010 12:06 PM

Anonymous said...

Mitsu-

I understand what you mean about consenting adults be allowed to be consenting adults. However, I teach in university (art no less) and I also lead a zen sangha. Not only are sexual relationships strictly forbidden institutionally in both instances, I morally and personally feel quite clearly why this is so.

There is an intimacy, an integrity, as well as specific shadows, that accompany the dynamics of different types of relationships. It doesn't take Moses, Freud, or the Vinaya to understand that you don't sleep with your students, patients, or those who entrust to you their spiritual guidance and welfare. Do you think therapists should sleep with patients? This is a much closer analogy to teachers (of various stripes) and their students than your blithe picture of a couple artist colleagues getting a little wild in the studio one night (you shouldn't hook up with co-workers either for that matter!)

Your theoretical relativism here is at best just kind of sweet; practically it's dangerously naive.

July 18, 2010 1:59 PM

Anonymous said...

Anonymous said...

How can those who were involved in previous "unsatisfactory" attempts to address these complaints now claim the ability to objectively process these complaints? They cannot. This "offer" to finally do the right thing is too little, too late. Have they no shame?

Are you a victim of Shimano's abuse? If so, why don't you speak about what he did to you, anonymously, of course. I think we should hear from the 'victims', if indeed there are any. Otherwise, what are we talking about?

July 18, 2010 2:32 PM

Jane said...

Aitken Roshi's opening letter states that there are many reports of abuse of women by Tai San on the web. Are there? I only know of the 2 women from '64. Where can one find the other "many reports" on the web?

Thank you

July 18, 2010 4:07 PM

Mushim Patricia Ikeda-Nash said...

I am deeply saddened to hear of the pain in this Sangha and I am well acquainted with the group dynamics which allow this sort of injury to take place and be rationalized, denied, or intellectualized.

In my point of view, there will never be a "one size fits all" set of ethical guidelines for a Zen group that works perfectly for everyone. However, in my experience, applying the same rules and standards to a Zen teacher as we apply to a psychotherapist is workable and beneficial. Zen teachers and their students who wish to have sexual and romantic relationships need only cease their teacher-student relationship both publicly and privately, and be open and honest about their relationship in the same way that might be expected from any two individual adults who are part of close and caring communities. The impact of any relationship, sexual or non, that involves lies, secrecy, betrayals, and cover-ups is damaging to everyone within a close-knit community of practice where people are striving for spiritual development in a sincere way.

Recently asked for my take on "The Future of Buddhism" for the Buddhist portal at [patheos.com](http://www.patheos.com), I commented that the communities I work with want transparent government and empowered community input. See <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/Results-Oriented-Dharma-US-Buddhism-in-the-21st-Century.html>

Mushim Ikeda-Nash
Oakland, CA

July 18, 2010 5:02 PM

Anonymous said...

Mushim, well presented and on the mark.

July 18, 2010 7:29 PM

Anonymous said...

To Jane:
start here- www.shimanoarchive.com
Beyond this, search google. You should find plenty.
I can't paste in this browser or I'd give other links.

July 18, 2010 8:46 PM

Anonymous said...

@Jane

Here: shimanoarchive(dot)com

July 19, 2010 9:27 AM

Anonymous said...

Statement from Zen Studies Society July 19, 2010

<http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?p=2067>

Posted by Philip Ryan in : Zen , [trackback](#)

Last week we indicated we'd contacted the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) regarding Eido Shimano Roshi's status at the organization. The President of ZSS's board sent the following statement in response:

We are grateful beyond words for the incomparable gift of Eido Roshi's Dharma treasure, and for his unstinting efforts to root Rinzai Zen Buddhism in American soil. Ever at home in the unconditional realm he spurs us to go beyond the relative vista.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the world of causation.

On July 4, 2010, Eido Shimano Roshi stepped down from the board of directors of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS). This was prompted by allegations of clergy misconduct. The ZSS is committed to fully investigating, clarifying and bringing resolution to this matter. Eido Roshi's wife, Aiho-san Shimano, also stepped down from the Board at that time.

It was with deepest gratitude and respect for their years of service to this organization and their humble effort to assist us in honestly processing this matter and preparing us for their transition from temporal authority, that we accepted their resignations from the ZSS Board.

After discussion with senior members of the American Zen Teachers Association, the ZSS's board has decided to seek outside professional assistance to move this process forward with openness and compassion for all.

We thank the ZSS board for their openness and prompt response and we wish them all the best going forward.

July 19, 2010 9:29 AM

Eye Witness said...

It is with considerable dismay that I have recently been informed that Mr. Shimano has continued to engage in sexual contact with his parishioners.

In reading through this blog, I see that the Zen Studies Society has invited the people they have harmed to come forward and to confide in their 'Ethics Committee'. I have a few thoughts on this matter.

If Mr. Shimano and/or other members of his clergy have sexually abused you, dear reader, I am very sorry that this happened to you.

And if I may offer some kind words of advice, I would say that your course of action should depend upon your level of traumatization. Please do not overestimate your own resilience nor underestimate the level of deceit you will encounter. Please think carefully about how much of that trauma was inflicted by the organization *itself*.

It is important that you realize that the Zen Studies Society operates like an *incest family*. There are secrets. There is fear. There are perversions of loyalty. Pretensions of ignorance. A swarming together to save Daddy, save buddhism, save themselves.

There is *no one* that you should confide in there; they are too wounded or confused to help you.

I therefore urge you *do not contact* the Board nor Committee; I fear that they will deepen your trauma and further damage your trust. Please know with *complete certainty* that the organization is complicit in your sexual assault.

Please know that you were *not alone* in that room when Mr. Shimano stepped forward to assault you. You just could not see all the people who embolden him; but they were there. He was entirely certain that they were right there behind him, ready to crush you if you ever cried out.

I am indeed very sorry that this happened to you. Many people *think* that it could never happen to them or to their loved ones. They are incorrect.

I *do encourage* you to make two phone calls and to move as swiftly as possible through the process:

1. Contact Mr. Mitchell Garabedian, a lawyer who is representing a plaintiff in a *February 2010* legal action against Mr. Shimano. Mr. Garabedian has successfully worked with many sexually abused parishioners and he is familiar with their circumstances and alternatives.

Phone: (617) 523-6250 Fax: (617) 523-3667

2. Contact the Sex Crimes and Prosecution Unit of the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. Phone: (212) 335-9373. Ask them to re-open their *1994 investigation* concerning Eido T. Shimano. They have plenty of sworn testimony from many witnesses.

The New York State Legislature has subsequently expanded its criminal code concerning professional sexual abuse, in which case you might avoid the cost of hiring a civil attorney. The DA's Office can also offer you assistance through Witness Counseling.

Please be aware that the Assistant District Attorney from the Sex Crimes and Prosecution Unit *contacted* the Zen Studies Society Board of Trustees in 1994 and advised them to call a halt to the sexual abuse, and *warned them* that as Mr. Shimano's employer, they are at risk of civil lawsuits by continuing to allow it.

Apparently they have continued to allow it. I am not at all surprised.

Attachments:

Sexual Assault and the Criminal Justice System

http://www.manhattanda.org/communityaffairs/brochures/Sex_Crimes.pdf

Mr. Mitchell Garabedian: Civil Law, Clergy Sexual Abuse

<http://www.google.com/#hl=en&source=hp&q=Mitchell+Garabedian&aq&fp=1&cad=b>

Please re-post this message as widely as possible on the internet. Thank you.

July 19, 2010 10:53 AM

Debbie said...

BAD LINK IN PRIOR POST: Mitchell Garabedian

http://www.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/stories/021402_garabedian.htm

http://www.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/overview/video_gallery/atty_garabedian.swf

July 19, 2010 3:47 PM

Involved said...

Eye Wit..., could you, without of course using names, discuss the nature of the cases of sexual abuse by Mr Shimano that have already been investigated or do you know where one could get this information? Is it available?

July 19, 2010 3:51 PM

Carol Spooner said...

Adam Genkaku Fisher began the comments here two months ago with this: "But I think that a Zen practice without honesty is like a car without tires ... it ain't goin' nowhere, no matter how shiny it looks."

So, we have all kinds of honesty here ... honest feelings of outrage and condemnation ... honest feelings of gratitude and devotion ... honest feelings of confusion, disappointment and disillusionment ... honest feelings of defensiveness ... honest feelings of righteousness.

It seems everyone feels entitled to his/her feelings/judgments/beliefs.

Those of us who practice Zen probably have sat with our feelings/judgments/beliefs time and time again and found them to be many-layered, constantly changing, and ultimately no ground to stand on -- but maybe not, I don't know about you so I shouldn't presume.

But as I read this sad story and these sad responses to it I find myself wondering whether there is a way to bring our awakened mind into this present situation? (Where else could it be?) And if we did that, how might that help --

"Sickness and medicine correspond with each other. The whole world is medicine. What are you?"

A related tale -- the one of Maezumi Roshi and ZCLA -- might be helpful.

There is a profoundly moving interview with Wendy Engokuo Nakao Roshi, the current Abbot at Zen Center of Los Angeles, where she discusses without flinching the damage done when Maezumi Roshi had his sexual affairs and alcohol problems. She also discusses with heartfelt clarity what they did at ZCLA to repair the damage. Deeply moving stuff, especially when she discusses Maezumi Roshi's years after the scandal. Much more interesting to me than salacious gossip. I do believe even the worst mistakes can be transformed into Buddha's teachings.

Part 1 is the early part of her spiritual development/path.

Part 2 is a very moving discussion of Maezumi Roshi and what happened at ZCLA.

Part 3 is a very interesting discussion of ZCLA and its horizontal/circle leadership structure ... and how the healing happened.

Worth listening, especially parts 2 & 3.

If anyone's interested here are the links:

Part 1: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-1.mp3>

Part 2: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-2.mp3>

Part 3: <http://www.urbandharma.org/mp3/ZCLA-3.mp3>

July 19, 2010 4:49 PM

Anonymous said...

This Eye Witness post smells fishy to me. Why would the Manhattan DA investigate something that took place many miles away in the Castkill Mountains? And if they did investigate and nothing came of it, doesn't that mean that they concluded that nothing illegal took place? Then why would they write to the board and tell them to put a stop to something that wasn't happening in Manhattan and wasn't even illegal to begin with? It would be like the Manhattan DA writing to the board of the PGA and telling them to stop Tiger Woods from cheating on his wife in Las Vegas. Also, why isn't that letter in the archives that have been posted recently? They seem to have a lot of letters to and from the board from that era.

And if a legal action was filed in Feb 2010, isn't that a matter of public record? Where's the evidence of that?

This is either a hoax or a money grubbing lawyer trying to stir the pot and see what floats to the surface. Either way, it's a new low point for this debate, and that's really saying something.

July 19, 2010 7:22 PM

Anonymous said...

Indeed, there is a fishy aroma about that post.... however the aroma may mask other scents. I note that in this entire Shimano controversy far too much emphasis is being placed on the sexual misconduct aspect and far too little attention is being paid to the undue influence, institutional culture issues, apparent untruths and cover-ups that appear to have been propagated.

Bear in mind that New York Zendo is located in Manhattan so there would be justification for involving the Manhattan DA if allegations were made concerning activities there. Any one who has watched any of the crime shows on TV knows that DA's do not necessarily prosecute for any number of reasons irrespective of illegality.

The Manhattan DA was evidently contacted at one point evidenced by a note appearing in the archive in 1994. There is also no way to know if the published archive is complete by any means, documentation may be missing or simply never made available.

I agree that it is doubtful that any legal action was filed in 2010 as you point out - it does not appear in any public record. However, having the knowledge of how to make such a

search enables one to search for filing actions in 1995 against Shimano, his wife and ZSS Board members. There is apparently no indication of the outcome of those filings available on line.

I disagree that the post is an either-or situation as postulated; there are other possibilities. According to a Google search, the lawyer named is largely responsible for bringing down the Boston Archdiocese and Cardinal Law. The man is obviously no fool and would not jeopardize his position by resorting to self-promotional advertising in some random blog posting. It is possible that the posting is from an aggrieved third party unconnected to the lawyer but privy to some undisclosed information.

All in all, I perceive the warnings presented by the post are indeed poignantly valid. It is essential for any aggrieved party to rely on the advise of personal counsel before becoming involved with any ZSS internal grievance process - no matter what reassurances are provided by newly minted public statements.

Thank you.

July 20, 2010 6:32 AM

stan said...

it is a very real concern. legal action can the the board's and hopefully, Shimano's, 'great motivator'. though, if threats of legal action were presented in the past and he has continued to 'abuse', then perhaps not the case on his part. But the board must take some serious steps to curtail and limit Shimano's involvement with the communities he is associated with as he obviously can not control himself and cannot be trusted anymore to do so. The ZSS could potentially, a la catholic church, be hit with costly civil lawsuits, depleting there already strained coffers.

July 20, 2010 9:05 AM

Anonymous said...

I'd just like to say that those who dismiss this discussion, and others like it, do a real disservice to the power of information, and transparency in matters like this.

Not to mention ignoring the mostly extremely thoughtful posts here and elsewhere. It smacks of self-righteousness, as much or more than those who are genuinely angry or hurt or upset, and who have a right to come to terms with those feelings here. I myself welcome and understand some ranting. Let's not be too prissy.

Every sangha, church, congregation what have you needs to have such a period of conflict facing issues like this. Time will move on, and perhaps legal and institutional happenings will take place. But it begins with voices, usually angry ones, to get something moving. And things are moving.

July 20, 2010 9:09 AM

REDDirt said...

"You don't know what you've lost till it's gone. They paved paradise and put in a parking lot."

Joanie Mitchell was really something. She also said,(on the same album) "everything comes and goes" and "it all comes down to you."

On and on she goes in this way.

Some fruit for the table.

July 20, 2010 4:52 PM

gomyo said...

It is nice to see someone finally succeed in getting the Buddhist community to take a good hard look at abuse. More thought on the matter here:

<http://gomyo.livejournal.com/40812.html>

July 20, 2010 8:36 PM

Anonymous said...

I agree, there is more going on here than just sexual misconduct. If there is smoke.....

July 20, 2010 9:39 PM

REDDirt said...

American Zen is doing very well. ZSS Zen, being DBZ and Shobo-ji, is not doing well at all.

To find out why read:

Holding the Lotus to the Rock by James Ford (found on thezensite)

The Song of the Dodo by David Quammen

Collapse, How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed by Jared Diamond

The Tipping Point by Malcolm Galdwell

July 22, 2010 9:29 AM

Anonymous said...

I don't know for sure if all those allegations are true. I know one thing though: I am so happy I did not send my female friend to Dai Bosatsu for session. Imagine how deeply would she be hurt if Eido Roshi started "teaching" her using "not easy to understand for unenlightened person methods".

Again, I don't know if this is true.

But again, please somebody tell me how would I be able to explain that even touching her breasts is a teaching.

I think Eido should just SAY SOMETHING. Otherwise we will be talking and talking and talking.

Instead of just sitting.

Also, now I understand how important is to be respectful towards students. Many people are done with Zen just to hear about this "scandal".

I am so glad I am almost done with this post.

To sit.

July 23, 2010 11:34 AM

Anonymous said...

It is lamentable that an ogre so vile and grotesque as Eido Shimano has been allowed to flourish freely in this country. Why was more not done to boot him back to Japan when it became clear that his true nature was that of a predatory sociopath who would prey upon the fairer sex at will wherever he went? Because of weakness, ignorance, Zen careerism and the hope of knighthood in the form of dharma transmission. Shame on all who gave him shelter and failed to warn those who needed warning - it was the equivalent of releasing a rabid dog into the playground of the local school during recess.

July 23, 2010 12:48 PM

Anonymous said...

Someone asked, 'why does roshi wear a gold brocade robe'? Probably a respected dharma legacy. But also because most of us, Westerners especially, want and expect such a thing.

I mistrust the intention of the author of this blogspot to cyber-prosecute a fellow teacher. Years ago, students of the author, under the influence of the young Tai San's (now Eido

Roshi's)charisma/"zen authenticity"/oriental-ness/whatever, abandoned their studies with Aitken Roshi to study with Tai San, and this at least gives the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Every writer to this blog who has a question about this matter or has something else of value to offer should instead consider responding directly as the ZSS board has requested, ask to have their note forwarded to the independent consultants in the investigation, and request a return receipt from the independent consultants indicating that those consultants have received the communication of concern/advice/complaint. Otherwise this appears to be the place to whine, gossip and speculate about what you want this to be about, based on your fraction of determined factual knowledge.

Anything with the appearance of misdemeanor or felonious exploitation of a non-consenting adult should be reported, investigated independently, and, if necessary, prosecuted. Especially, if damage has been done, and it is criminal, than it should be apologized for, with personal and orgainzational sanctions being applied to the full extent allowed by the law of the land. Part of the independent investigation should be a thorough psychological evaluation to see if the behavior or the personality characteristics under investigation qualify for a DSM-IV diagnosis. Therapy would then be an option. I personally would not trust an international governing body of roshis to effectively prosecute this matter, based on past history.

This is the modern world, and *Adults have affairs*. If you are not too badly damaged by the world, you can say NO, and not wind up being intimate with someone over and over and over, especially if you know he's married. In the cynical view, its a bigger notch in the gun to bag a roshi than vice versa.

July 23, 2010 1:38 PM

Anonymous said...

To Anonymous July 23, 2010 11:34 am:

Have you gone through < <http://www.shimanoarchive.com/> > yet?

If not please do so.

I assure you this archive of letters has not be generated because the folks involved had nothing better to do with their time.

In fact believe that each person involved was sincerely involved in the practice.

Further, if you haven't done so read <http://www.zenstudies.org/ethical.html>

Specifically

"The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers

and students."

Most of us are aware of Shimano's behavior but here the organization is saying that at least one other sanctioned teacher has also engaged in improper sexual relationships as well (and quite possibly other questionable activities as well.)

It's no longer about allegations. For the most part it is about Mr. Shimano's behavior and the implications of that behavior and whether he is suitable to be a Zen Teacher and worthy to be considered a true Rinzai Zen Master. (By extension it would apply to other so-called Zen leaders as well.)

Specifically, considering Shimano's behavior over the past 40+ any serious Zen student who may find him initially attractive to study with needs to ask "Is this really the person I want spend serious time and effort to train with for something that is so personal, and so potentially meaningful, and so important?" Further, any serious Zen student also needs to ask "How will training intensively with such a man influence my own behavior and outlook?"

July 23, 2010 1:44 PM

Carol Spooner said...

James Ford and Brad Warner have both weighed in on their blogs.

Ford: Zen in the West, Sex & Institutions

<http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/2010/07/zen-in-west-sex-institutions.html>

Warner: It's Not Just About Sex

<http://hardcorezen.blogspot.com/2010/07/its-not-just-about-sex.html>

July 23, 2010 2:28 PM

genkaku said...

Ford and Warner seem to have similar, well-intentioned approaches.

Ethical brochures may be a good idea for those whose training managed to skip over that part, but I do hope that we can recall that individuals -- that's two arms and two legs -- were (or may have been, if you prefer) seriously wronged and deserve better than brochures.

Right -- the reason I know that shit stinks is that mine is no different. But if it looks like shit and smells like shit, then I reserve the right to call it shit and not talk around actual-factual wounds as if they were just the product of some fluffy 'ethical' lapse.

July 24, 2010 6:14 PM

Anonymous said...

Dr. Shoshanna -

I assume that you've worked with victims of sexual abuse, being a professional psychologist. I assume you remember some of their experiences.

I also assume that the beauty you received from this man was worth the price they paid for the complicity of the community at large in shunning the "lack of forgiveness" shown by those who TRIED to stop this, long ago.

I believe in absolute forgiveness. I really do. But as the father of two daughters and a person who has repeatedly seen the long-term devastation that comes from behavior like Shimano's, my forgiveness is very likely to be paid to a man in shackles if I have any input on the matter. And I can honestly say that I would continue to work with any forgiveness I should find in my heart.

But I really have to say that the wonder of your experience is curious to me. I am truly happy for whatever good you received from this man, but given that you were steps away from being a victim had you been weaker, or a better mark in some way, I should think you might be somewhat more understanding of the reactions in his wake.

Forgiveness, yes. But if my daughters - or anyone's daughters - were in the presence of this man, with you to introduce them, I would have to be very concerned, even in the presence of all the forgiveness in the world.

- KD Jones

July 25, 2010 1:18 AM

Anonymous said...

Don't know if you've seen the Zen Studies Society's ethical guidelines.

Here's the beginning of it:

"We are grateful beyond words for the incomparable gift of Eido Roshi's Dharma treasure, and for his unstinting efforts to root Rinzai Zen Buddhism in American soil. Ever at home in the unconditional realm, he spurs us to go beyond the relative vista.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the world of causation; each of our actions has a result.

The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students. In the past, attempts to address concerns about such relationships were not satisfactory. (...)"

Which, thought by thought, breaks down more or less to:

1. We are grateful.
2. Because Eido Roshi is great.
3. And he's worked really hard at great and good things.
4. And he's AT HOME IN THE UNCONDITIONAL REALM. (This may be a poor combination of cultures and metaphors in this case.)
5. He's made "us" better people. (Well, maybe some of us...)
6. SOMEBODY'S actions have results. (!)
7. Somewhere in the world there have been improper relationships between "teachers" and students.
and
8. At some point in the past, at a location unknown unknown to us, someone seems to have dealt with improper relationships in a manner that probably should have been viewed as unsatisfactory at the time, whenever that was.

Amusing.

July 25, 2010 2:16 AM

Anonymous said...

I should add -

In the previous post re the Zen Studies Society's ethical preamble, my concern is the ABSOLUTE lack of the kind of open, honest, vigorous, even brutal honesty that drew some of us to Zen. Me anyway.

July 25, 2010 2:19 AM

Anonymous said...

What and where is this unconditional realm?

July 25, 2010 1:04 PM

Anonymous said...

I was really disturbed by the ZSS Ethics preamble, particularly the line: "The Zen Studies Society acknowledges that there have been occurrences of improper relationships between teachers and students."

It is simply not honest, they are still hiding, deceiving and manipulating. It would have come across far more credible had they substituted "Eido T. Shimano" for the word "teachers." The way they stated it was a slap in the face to all of Shimano's myriad victims. The ZSS Board simply do not care about all the people their "unconditional"

guru hurt - even now. The people involved with ZSS need to take a really hard look at themselves and ask, "Are we unconsciously involved in a personality cult around this guy?"

July 25, 2010 5:31 PM

Anonymous said...

I can't remember where it was, but I once passed by the door of "the unconditional realm." It had a sign above the door that said, "Abandon critical thinking all ye who enter here." I decided to keep walking....

July 26, 2010 12:59 AM

Anonymous said...

Wow! There is a door!?! Most interesting. Now I am wondering which way it swings.

and

Perhaps ZSS used the word teachers rather than Eido Shimano because there were other teachers or senior students behaving promiscuously.

July 26, 2010 3:47 PM

Anonymous said...

This is a very important time for Zen in America. While I was in Japan, It was quite apparent that most "Zen Temples" were functioning as museums, as well preserved pieces of History! I was informed that in practice, the vast majority of Zen clergy constitute a "funeral director's guild."

Seeing this with my own eyes was extremely troubling. It was shocking to recognize that what I had perceived as the great gift of Zen to the world seemed to be a materialistic trap.

At this point in time it seems like Zen clerics in Japan are jockeying for personal possessions, power and wealth accumulating and dispensing misery as they proceed.

At this great time, in the infancy of American Zen Buddhism we are beginning to deal with real transparency. We are now able to stand! We are now together able to see with some clarity and examine reality as it is and are thus empowered to make informed choices for the future of American Zen.

Through great suffering as a community, we are now beginning to recognize the motivations that can derail a teacher from the path of Buddhadharma.

"All of you - If it's for the sake of the Dharma, don't hesitate to sacrifice your bodies or give up your lives!" "People with so few roots of faith - will the day ever come when they see the end of this?"

What we are witnessing is not necessarily about preservation of the status quo, but recognizing the reality of suchness, itself.

Thank you for sitting!

July 27, 2010 12:39 AM

genkaku said...

In Zen, there are several stories of 'masters' who held their tongues when wrongly accused. Whether self-serving or not, sometimes such restraint has been referred to as "noble silence."

But into that mix of sometimes-honest, sometimes-dishonest restraint, I think the words of (I think it was) Kapleau Roshi are worth remembering:

"Silence is golden and sometimes its color is pure yellow."

July 27, 2010 5:43 AM

Anonymous said...

Apparently there is at least a modicum of turmoil within the Zen Studies Society; we can only trust that this opportunity for systemic change might result in complete transparency in the handling of this latest Eido Roshi debacle, although this is doubtful. The truth has been completely disregarded for too long by Eido Roshi and by extension, his organization, the Zen Studies Society. Enough questions have been raised in the American Zen community over Eido Shimano that it is incumbent on the organization to tell the public the complete truth about what is taking place. No one - in forty years, has ever stood in the way of the ZSS Board doing its work, except those within its own confines.

The available archives, when thoroughly examined, reveal certain behavior patterns of a serious nature that cause harm and hurt to others. We need to ask some very pointed questions to enable us to develop some understanding of the dynamics around Eido Shimano.

The man is a liar, he relates to the world only through dominance. He is arrogant, completely non altruistic, and considers all friendships and associations expendable. Eido Shimano "Roshi" is an exquisitely constructed deceptive "character" that superficially appears to be a powerful, insightful and genuine Zen master. He provides no hint of

inadequacy in public behind his mask of deception. However, on a deeper level he is profoundly addicted to his dominance and abuse of women, students, and people in general. He is intent on weaving his elaborate webs of lies around his own significance. Eido Roshi appears to be totally unconcerned by the fact that he is deliberately lying to people. He seems to assume that other people are merely models of himself - there for his amusement at the time. This involves him seeing everyone as nothing more than a deceptive mask, since he is so heavily invested in deception himself.

He needs assistance, but he can only avail himself of such through his own recognition of the problem, it can not be imposed or mandated from "outside." The sangha needs to remove him from a position of authority over students forthwith to prevent any possibility of future hurt to vulnerable people. This they can do, through the Board. If the Board refuses to act to remove Eido Shimano they will be remiss in their Charter obligations and in violation of their own ethical guidelines.

ZSS has had a set of ethical guidelines in place since at least June of 1993 according to the on line archive. These guidelines have proscribed "Sexual advances and/or liaisons between teachers, guest lecturers or other religious and any kessei student, sesshin and/or workshop attendee, sangha member or visitor" - for seventeen years. The "Ethical Guidelines" are nothing new. The failure of the Board, the Dharma heirs, and senior staff to enforce the ethical guidelines or even recognize their violation calls for a serious accounting.

As for involving Japanese institutions mentioned elsewhere... "rotsa ruck."

July 27, 2010 7:04 AM

Eye Witness said...

I looked through the archives, and I must say that I had thought that I was long past being surprised, but I was very much mistaken indeed.

As anyone who has been exposed to Mr. Shimano knows, he is a liar of the crafty variety. His methods are simple but sly and corrupting: he plants lies in the minds of the people around him, so that they will go forth and do his lying for him.

The lies revolve around three basic topics: money, sexual abuse, and discrediting anyone who might tell the truth. He bases his lies on a small nugget of truth, and then he departs from there.

So the archives were quite illuminating to me. Yes, the nuggets of truth were there...but then there is also the rest of the story, the actual truth. My goodness.

...

For example: The lies about the money from the future sale of the parsonage.

For decades, Mr. Shimano has revisited one question in particular: who will get the money when the current parsonage is sold ~\$550,000; him personally? or the Zen Studies Society, as was originally stipulated.

When he puts forth his argument that he should get the money personally, he speaks of Mrs. Carlson's admiration for him. (Mrs. Carlson was the initial benefactor of the Zen Studies Society.) The nugget of truth that he displays to support this claim of admiration is Mrs. Carlson's very nice letter from 1974.

But wait...there is more, there is much more in the archives. And it concludes with Mrs. Carlson's letter of utter contempt for Mr. Shimano's deceit and her complete disassociation in 1984.

And in the archives I see that Mr. Shimano has even built a promotional video around the Carlsons, no doubt to display to potential donors. Needless to say, the movie does not mention Mrs. Carlson's sullied sense of betrayal nor her scorn.

...

Continuing on in the archives to 2003, I see that in James Frechter's letter to the accountant, the parsonage is no longer listed as one of the Society's assets.

So what happened? Did he finally succeed in being gifted the parsonage?

Is the Zen Studies Society financially secure enough to be giving away that kind of money? Especially since Mr. Shimano's disreputable behavior has got to have lost them \$550,000 in donations alone.

I also notice in the archives that Mr. Shimano is unhappy with the amount of his pension. Perhaps if the organization had not lost the donations, his pension could have more to his liking.

As one of the Trustees points out in her resignation letter from the Board in 1995, Mr. Shimano's pension should not be funded by raiding the assets of the organization. If his pension is paltry, it is because he has earned it.

July 27, 2010 7:34 AM

genkaku said...

It would be helpful to have an inventory of all Zen Studies Society assets -- the buildings, the statues, the gongs, the scrolls, the tatami, the incense, the books, the land, etc. Who paid for these things and to what end? Who owns them?

Clearly, people must have made donations to Mr. Shimano personally. But separating those donations from the other assets that many Zen students made possible ... maybe a decent audit would be a help before those assets start disappearing.

July 27, 2010 12:33 PM

Anonymous said...

I once had a dog who would take his bones and bury them all over the yard, after a few years it was impossible to figure out exactly how many he had and where he hid them.

July 28, 2010 8:46 PM

Anonymous said...

Great idea Genkaku!

I hope current ZSS Sangha who care more for the Dharma and the American legal system than the Shimanos are reading these posts.

* * *

There is plenty of indication in shimanoarchive.com that the accounting of the organization became lax and suspect during various periods over the years. (Funds channeled in from a convicted felon's drug dealings immediately comes to mind. As does the willingness of the board to support unwarranted expenditures e. g. \$36k on an anniversary party as opposed to the proposal for a more most \$10k.) It certainly would not be a bad idea to do a thorough audit with an eye to assuring that the donor's wishes were followed, the rules governing non profits have been followed, and that funds meant for ZSS and not for ETS were directed properly (Mrs. Carlon's requests for the return of funds appears to have been ignored with respect to the sale of the original parsonage. The profit seems to have been over \$500K!)

Further, it seems that the members of the board don't all and / or always realize their legal responsibilities are and what personal penalties could incurred (particularly if they aren't insured) and that their loyalty to the Shimano's may cost them more than mere grief. I wonder of that's they bargained for.

It's troubling to learn from those archives that Shimano had a life long concern with money for himself and his wife while relying almost completely on the board's willingness to shuffle around major donations. Yet as it became clearer and clearer that his donor base dried up due to news of his sketchy ethics, he just seemed to try to be more devious and manipulative.

Is it any wonder why ETS will never willingly let go of the position of Abbot?

* * *

Someone wrote this in another blog "Give the board room to work. Rome was not built or dismantled in a day or even many days."

Sheer Nonsense!

Those of us who have been observing ETS' and the ZSS board's actions for 5, 10, 20 or more years are at best extremely skeptical. It's simply a function of who has gotten on the board in the first place!

It is time to grow up, to be decisive, and to do what is right in the conditional realm! Remember that while fostering realization perhaps more than any other path, Buddhism has always been for the most part quite rational and ethical.

BTW -- Rome was pretty much destroyed in a day. "...the night of July 18, 64 AD, fire broke out in the merchant area of the city of Rome. ... When the conflagration finally ran its course it left seventy percent of the city in smoldering ruins.

...

"From the ashes of the fire rose a more spectacular Rome. A city made of marble and stone with wide streets, pedestrian arcades and ample supplies of water to quell any future blaze. The debris from the fire was used to fill the malaria-ridden marshes that had plagued the city for generations."

That Rome lasted some 400 years!

* * *

To paraphrase Soen Roshi, "Completely Combust Yourselves!"

July 28, 2010 11:41 PM

Anonymous said...

So is it a Rome or an omelette?

July 31, 2010 7:03 PM

Daigetsu said...

This is not about Zen, it is about ethical misconduct, abuse of authority.

To permit Eido Shimano to continue as the Abbot of DBZ or any temple would be condoning his unethical conduct. The game is over the cat is out of the box.

This is no longer about Zen, this is no longer about Buddhism, it is about the American Standard of Ethical conduct. It is about our ethical duty to protect venerable people from predators.

In the end if he continues to refuse to immediately step down then we will have to decide if we will continue to support his unethical behaviour, or shun DBZ directly or indirectly.

I call on Eido Shimano Abbot of DBZ to be compassionate and retire immediately as Abbot at DBZ.

Shimano san the game is over, everyone has lost. If you have a shred of Japanese Honor left in you retire, and let true dharma become complete.

July 31, 2010 7:10 PM

Anonymous said...

If he had true honor in the first place none of this would have happened. And this was his greatest teaching for me. To honor students with respect and basic decency no matter how damaged they are, they are still Human beings. Awake Human beings! Not castigate and control them. Beyond shame, no honor in that.

August 1, 2010 6:51 PM

Anonymous said...

In Zen we have a very useful concept called "skillful means." It usually refers to the way a "master" helps a "student" attain realization. However, like most of Zen Training it is a useful concept to apply to other areas as well.

In the past Aitken Roshi and some of Eido's more independent and senior students took extra steps in trying to understand what was going on with him. Mental health professionals were actually consulted. I think we can reasonably assume that real events were described and the health care professionals provided some guidance.

Essentially, Shimano's "misbehavior" fits the patterns that define a certain psychopathology called "Anti-social Disorder." It used to be called sociopathy.

Students who spent significant time with him should be able to list specific details that fit so many of the basic characteristics of anti-social disorder:

(A partial listing)

- Superficial Charm
- Grandiose Sense Of Self-Worth
- Pathological Lying
- Cunning/Manipulative
- Lack Of Remorse Or Guilt
- Shallow Affect
- Callous/Lack Of Empathy
- Failure To Accept Responsibility For Own Actions

- Parasitic Lifestyle
 - Poor Behavioral Control
 - Promiscuous Sexual Behavior
 - Impulsivity
 - Irresponsibility
- from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hare_Psychopathy_Checklist

So how might we skillfully handle the situation?

First, to help Shimano:

It appears that treatment for him would basically consist mainly of some form of psychotherapy. But as so many others have pointed out, he would first have to recognize the problem before taking the needed action. We need to consider up front that after 78 years he may be "beyond" such help. Perhaps those close to him should not give up but primary energy needs to be directed elsewhere as well.

Help for the ZSS Sangha:

Will a majority on the ZSS Board finally compassionately remove him? The compassion may need, no, will need to be quite firm and decisive. But after after 40 years there has been but a slight shift. Those appointed to the board were those whom he considered most loyal which is where the organizational dysfunction comes from. Is the current shift where "ethics" are posted, promises of investigation and consequences made real or just for show? Time to act is already long past due. But time will reveal the truth of the promises.

Are Eido's heirs even legitimate? Good question. But it looks too much like simply time, loyalty and showmanship.

But the bigger question is whether it is healthy to train with an essentially dysfunctional group of people. Will any of the current students read this as well as the archive and make some connections and help each other transition away from the currently dysfunctional sangha? Personally, I hope so. Others may say, "To each his own." and "Good luck with that!"

As for others to come in the future, someone else expressed it very well:

"In the end if he continues to refuse to immediately step down then we will have to decide if we will continue to support his unethical behaviour, or shun DBZ directly or indirectly."

The main point is that given the chronic situation of a dysfunctional sangha, the least that should be done is to make the information public and not to fear that the truth will hurt the Dharma. Yamada Roshi expressed it well years ago, "Yet even though it may take

years, Zen will surely recover it's good name. The Buddhist Dharma is not such a weak and powerless thing that it can be destroyed by something like this."

It would be good if the main stream Buddhist publications could find a way to shed more light on ZSS instead of simply relying on the information being disseminated on blogs, but it seem that blogs do have a role in this.

August 2, 2010 10:56 AM

Witness said...

Yes, Genkaku, an audit would be useful. And yes, Anonymous August 1, the Board needs to terminate Mr. Shimano's employment contract. And yes, Anonymous July 28, the Board doesn't understand where its responsibilities lie. This is probably true for many people who join the boards of religious charities, so let's take a closer look.

In New York State, the Board of Directors of a religious charity (the Zen Studies Society) is responsible for protecting the interests and safety of its students. Since the students cannot be the watchdogs of the Board, each director is accountable to the New York State Attorney General, Mr. Andrew Cuomo.

But the Directors of the Zen Studies Society operate with a different set of priorities. They think that their job is to protect the interests of their priest. And they seem to think that they are accountable to no one; they operate with secrecy, even from their fellow board members.

That is why some directors do not stay on the Board for very long, especially when yet another of Mr. Shimano's sexual assaults comes to light. The secrecy is broken and the stench oozes out as the senior board members begin to tell them the truth. These directors feel sickened and resign from the board.

But I'll say it again: The real head of the Board is Attorney General Andrew Cuomo. These directors (and students) should be addressing their resignation letters to Mr. Cuomo himself.

...

I would encourage *everyone* here in the blogosphere to bypass the Board and to address your concerns directly to the Attorney General. Just write him a letter, you can submit it online. If you choose to be anonymous, write the letter anyway. The Attorney General is well aware that "anonymous" does not mean "not true".

The purpose is to provide a *roadmap* for Mr. Cuomo: names, approximate dates, what you have witnessed, and what you have been told.

And in case you are wondering, please know that Mr. and Mrs. Shimano are indifferent to your concerns. They have been reading your letters for decades, and they have learned

two lessons: 1. You will weary of remembering these repugnant matters, and 2. You will go away.

So, please, put your words where they will be of more lasting public value: the permanent records of the New York State Attorney General's Office.

...

I see that with the current revelations of the ongoing sexual abuse, that there have already been two resignations from the Board: Mr. and Mrs. Eido Shimano. Perhaps Mr. Shimano could open his resignation letter with something like this:

“Dear Attorney General Cuomo:

I am a sexual predator and for the past 40+ years, I have sexually abused my own clergy, my parishioners and their wives. Yet another of my victims has recently spoken out, but I am hoping that the silent ones commit suicide. I continue to be employed by the Zen Studies Society, because I am their high priest.”

And then he could continue his letter with the uses of his temple and monastery as sexual hunting grounds for himself and his clergy, his use of other clergy's temples and a mental hospital as hunting grounds, the collusion of his wife, his corrupting influence on his Board and his monks, his uses of drug money, the duplicitous nature of his religious credentials, the whole destructive litany of fraud.

But wait...scroll up to the top of this blog. That sounds like what Aitken Roshi is asking for: an explanation from Mr. Shimano himself. Not from the witless imposters who surround Mr. Shimano, an explanation from the fraudster himself.

...

Submit your concerns online at:

http://www.ag.ny.gov/resource_center/complaints/pdfs/comp_char.pdf

New York State Office of the Attorney General
Charities Division
120 Broadway, 3rd Floor
New York, New York 10271
(212) 416-8400 (phone)

The Zen Studies Society is a not-for-profit Religious Charity in New York State, a 501-C3 Corporation, located at 223 East 67 Street, New York, NY 10021

August 2, 2010 8:36 PM

Kobutsu Malone said...

Breaking Release - Finally; after 28 years under wraps:

"Zen and the Art of Seduction" by Robin Westen

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDF's/19820400R_Zen_Seduction.html

August 3, 2010 2:20 AM

Anonymous said...

This stuff is disgusting, sickening.

I became interested in Zen as a consequence of searching for "spiritual center" and found the beginning of it to be in meditation.

I began to look at Zen practice seriously as a result. The first attempt at a making a sangha association was not a good experience.

I began to look around, using the internet as a source for contacts and possible groups to practice with, and found a big pile of crap.

It seems to me to be this way. There is not one "senior dharma leader" in this country un-contaminated by "noble silence" in this matter.

If there is such an individual, I would very much appreciate learning of him or her because I would be interested in that particular dharma as a manner of approaching Dharma.

August 3, 2010 9:26 AM

Anonymous said...

To Anonymous August 3, 2010 9:26.

You should not confine your search for True Dharma in Japanese Zen only. There are Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean Zen tradition also other Buddhist tradition. Besides, there are some Japanese Zen centers that genuinely guide students.

Even, if we one day happened to find out there is a blemish in our Sangha, we could jump out of the boat or remain in the sangha, if after serious consideration we can help for the betterment.

Not everybody who remains in the poisoned sangha is a brain-washed zombie, he/she might be a bodhisatva who struggles to provide the medicine. Mara, even in the form of Roshi,

will recognize his/her presence and tries to kick off this Bodhisatva.

Namaste

August 3, 2010 12:12 PM

genkaku said...

Hi anonymous 2:20 a.m. The short answer to your implied question is that we are all 'contaminated' as you put it. Seriously, I mean that... no self-help, calm-cool-and-collected Zen bullshit.

The question is, in what way will anyone attempt to address that 'contamination?' After a number of years under Eido's wing and now 30-odd years later, the only thing I can think of is this: "The Zen teacher may be a liar, but zazen is no liar."

But that's just me.

August 3, 2010 12:35 PM

Tangen said...

Who the fuck are Kobutsu Malone and Genkaku! Fucking American hypocriets!

August 3, 2010 1:46 PM

Ryushin Malone said...

Now that's a vary good and interesting comment. It is not true that no one wants to deal with this. "Real" teachers do not necessarily need transmission, for example, Siddhartha Gautama Buddha! If you truly see reality as it is, everyone has transmission... Unless you have a bicycle or you LIE about receiving transmission and doing practice. The thing about Zen is that it was designed to control 16-year-old samurai, juvenile delinquents so they wouldn't go out killing, misbehaving or raping daddies' assets.

Now, In America, it would appear that this practice has become more or less a hobby to middle aged "white" people with money and time to do this hobby. Some do and support the practice because they know in they're hearts why we are doing this. But most do not. Is it possible that Zen in America needs some serious alterations in order to adapt to its environment? What? You have to wake up at 3am? No thanks. What? The Awakened State of Mind??? What's that? Oh wake up at 3am? No thanks. ect, The point being that this is not one thousand years ago and we are NOT children!

It is so strange to see that no one sees that. Eido Shimano is a perfect example of this training completely backfiring, causing not only him pain and suffering but many, many people. Students! Aiha.

And Kobutsu, if you don't like the way I write than that's too bad, because this is who I am and at the age of 29 I have a right to be part of this Sangha no matter how much I make a fool out of myself!

To Anon; This is a real teacher.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shodo_Harada

August 3, 2010 2:35 PM

gomyo said...

Hey Tangen, who the fuck are you?

August 3, 2010 8:30 PM

Anonymous said...

Tangen said...

"Who the fuck are Kobutsu and Genkaku! Fucking American hypocrities!"

Dear Tangen,

Asked and answered!

It seems you are attacking Kobutsu and Genkaku because they have shed some bright light on Shimano.

Is that the case?

If so, why does this make you upset?

Why does providing very disturbing but true information about Shimano make Kobutsu and Genkaku hypocrites?

I await your answers.

August 4, 2010 6:01 AM

Anonymous said...

Dear Anon August 3, 2010 9:26 AM

You wrote

"It seems to me to be this way. There is not one "senior dharma leader" in this country uncontaminated by "noble silence" in this matter.

"If there is such an individual, I would very much appreciate learning of him or her because I would be interested in that particular dharma as a manner of approaching Dharma."

Actually this is not true, but I know how you feel.

Things went on in the background, for example

The the Dali Lama held a dharma leaders meeting in 1993 after which the following statement was agreed to

“Each student must be encouraged to take responsible measures to confront teachers with unethical aspects of their conduct. If the teacher shows no sign of reform, students should not hesitate to publicize any unethical behavior of which there is irrefutable evidence. This should be done irrespective of other beneficial aspects of his or her work and of one's spiritual commitment to that teacher. It should also be made clear in any publicity that such conduct is not in conformity with Buddhist teachings. No matter what level of spiritual attainment a teacher has, or claims to have, reached, no person can stand above the norms of ethical conduct.”

(See the top of the [shimanoarchive.com](http://www.shimanoarchive.com) for the list of attendees.)

Specific to the matter here see

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDF's/19810221R_Aitken_Roshi.pdf

and

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDF's/19950809R_ZenTeachers_ZSS.pdf

Further, while ultimately ineffective Soen tried to reign in Shimano in various ways, if you speak to some of the students who studied with Soen and Shimano and trace the ShimanoArchives you will see that.

Plus there are legal and privacy considerations to contend with. Unfortunately very few women publicly came forward, this is why so much of the archives had to be redacted. This is why no publisher would take the Westen article. Those who came forward privately over the years motivated large numbers of people including some ZSS board members to leave Shimano and Zen Studies Society over the years, and finally those 8 American Zen Teachers

Robert Aitken, Yvonne Rand, Alan Senauke, Jan Chozen Bays, Susan Jion Postal, Helen Yuho Harkaspi, Bodhin Kjolhede, and Philip Kapleau to contact the ZSS board at the time.

In the end, Genkaku may be correct when he says "are all 'contaminated'" and "The Zen teacher may be a liar, but zazen is no liar."

No doubt there are teachers who are more ethical. On the otherhand we all may need to learn not to go around looking outside for the perfect teacher.

I do hope you find a very good teacher and come back and tell us who it is.

Good luck!

August 4, 2010 6:40 AM

Anonymous said...

You might want to check the spelling... it's "hypocrites." You might also look up "ad hominem" while you're at it.

Where exactly is the hypocrisy? And what of their being American?

August 4, 2010 10:16 AM

Anonymous said...

Dear Maha-Sangha,

Reading Robin Westen article, it is very sad indeed how Zen was (is) being manipulated. How easy kensho/satori is bestowed to a Zen student. Does it imply the immaturity of the teacher? Is that the consequence of Soen Roshi's bestowing Dharma Transmission (Roshi) with haste to comply ES's student request? How then immature (unprepared) Roshi could give further Dharma Transmission to the next lineage? To what effect will it dilute the meaning of transmission?

Comparing with current episode, it is a repeat. At that time ES resigned from the board and remained as an abbot, now is the same. The board split, and some resigned(?). Now the split already occurred, but still no one resigns. If now they resigned and the board were replaced with new people handpicked by ES, then it would be the same story. Interesting.

One thing for sure, current episode already creates a schism in the sangha (it is heinous crime in Buddhahood). It also creates poisoned environment. It already made some fanatics to deceive others for his/her survival (without ES he/she could find no job outside). This situation itself clearly depicts the quality and integrity of his conduct and teaching.

Namaste

August 4, 2010 11:28 AM

Tangen said...

What is hypocrite?

Kobutsu malone uses Eido Shimano roshi on his website "hoodiemonks" as a personal reference. On the other hand he accuses Eido roshi true or not true "I don't no" of a lot of things.

Genkaku probable has some personal issues with Eido roshi too! In my opinion he is a little bit too fanatic in his comments.

My spelling is not without faults because english is not my native language! My apologies for using the word Americans. This is not correct!

August 4, 2010 12:27 PM

Anonymous said...

Is spelling so important?

If so, why don't you correct other misspellings?

August 4, 2010 12:46 PM

Anonymous said...

Dear Ryushin Malone,

You raise some interesting points about the practical side of practice.

Perhaps someone can suggest an appropriate forum to discuss them, or where they are already being discussed.

Meanwhile, to touch on some of them very briefly:

Re: "The thing about Zen is that it was designed to control 16-year-old samurai, juvenile delinquents so they wouldn't go out killing, misbehaving or raping daddies' assets."

There may be some truth in this relative to the Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition some centuries ago.

But I and may be others might be interested in some references.

I have heard of the saying "Rinzai for the Shogun, S t for the peasants"

Rinzai Zen seemed to have influenced the Samurai class. However while there is much Feudal Japan-ization in Zen, I don't think controlling 16 year old juvenile delinquents through Zen training was high on anyone's To Do List. But in a more appropriate venue, an explanation of this assertion would be of some interest to some of us.

Re: "Oh wake up at 3am? No thanks."

Early morning meditation spans religious cultures and is not limited to Zen younglings. One of the places I look for comparative meditative practice study is the writings of Swami Sivananda.

Sivananda's writings and the ashram couldn't be further from training for belligerent youth (thought it probably would be good). Sivananda lists 14 points of meditation I think one and two are most relevant here:

1. Regularity of time, place and practice are important. Regularity conditions the mind to slow down its activities with a minimum of delay.
2. The most effective times are early dawn and dusk, when the atmosphere is charged with special spiritual force. If it is not feasible to sit for meditation at these times, choose an hour when you are not involved with daily activities, and a time when the mind is apt to be calm.

I don't know of any American Zen tradition that says something much different. Except of course folks are expected to follow schedules when attending Zazen Meetings, Zazenkai, Sesshin, and Kessei or Ango.

Forgive me if I'm missing your point regarding Americanization or, perhaps, more to the point lay Zen practice. Or are you proposing an examination of training for Zen clergy (as well)?

Also address my basic understanding that regardless of the field there is going to be quantity and there is going to be quality, but without significant quantity there can be no quality.

Regards.

August 4, 2010 12:56 PM

Anonymous said...

From Spike: speaking of Soen trying to 'reign in' Eido Roshi, I believe he *arranged* for him to marry. ER may be seen to be reacting to this ever since.

Speaking of zen teachers as liars, here is how Jack Engler (1986) described Western students attempts to meditate: "(They) appear to become fixated on what may be called a psychodynamic level of experience (Brown and Engler, 1980). Their practice continues to be dominated by primary practice thinking and 'unrealistic experience' (Maupin, 1965), as well as by an increase in fantasy, daydreaming, reverie, imagery, spontaneous recall of past memories, derepression of conflictual material, incessant thinking, and emotional lability, including dramatic swings in moods (M. Sayadaw, 1973; Walsh, 1977:, 1978; Kornfield, 1979; Kapleau, 1965)." (from the article Therapeutic Aims in Psychotherapy and Meditation: Developmental Stages in the Repression of Self. Published in Transformations of Consciousness: Conventional and Contemplative Perspectives on Development. Wilber, Engler, 1986: Shambala).

Here is the point: any decent, competent zen teacher KNOWS THIS about the practice of his or her Western students, if they have an honest relationship. Most (not all) zazen does allow itself to be lied about, and any zen teacher/lecturer I have ever heard has never copped to this fact. Meanwhile, the pot calls the kettle black.

August 4, 2010 1:24 PM

Anonymous said...

Monastics everywhere rise early to meditate and/or to pray in the quiet of the day.

Why such disrespect for what others have found useful, continuously so, over such great spans of time? Must be something there to attract and hold human attentive ness over and over and over again.

Check it out. For yourself.

August 4, 2010 2:12 PM

Ryushin Malone said...

@Tangen

Just where on the hoodiemonks site does my father use Eido Shimano as a reference?

Just where does Kobutsu accuse Shimano of anything?

You might look up the word "vilification" while you're at it.

@Anon

What I was getting at was possibly a more communal practice with families living and practicing together. Like before we had houses, each of us. It's possible that the practice

of Zen can be this way, it's called a Sangha, a community, the thing that Shimano repeatedly destroys.

In my personal experience with Zen, whilst in Japan doing session, I was resting by not having my back straight and someone came along and stuck the Kasaku in my back... I've had 2 major back surgeries at the age of 24. Things of this nature, aggressiveness, yelling, not moving an inch to disturb yourself and others that is not the true path to gentle heartedness. Time of day has nothing to do with Awakening and this moment. It was only an example of Zen as a "turn off," while liberating all beings.

But this blog is not about that. This blog is about Eido Shimano's abuse of people coupled with his addiction to power over dynamics and his not being present here front and come forth and make a statement in response to these accusations.

This is way closer to home than we might possibly imagine.

August 4, 2010 3:29 PM

Anonymous said...

From Spike: why such disrespect for scientific studies? Why such disrespect for Kapleau?

August 4, 2010 4:49 PM

Anonymous said...

Hi Anon (july 28,2010 11:41)

"BTW -- Rome was pretty much destroyed in a day."

The "Rome" I was thinking of actually, and made the comment in reference to, was not the city in Italy nor was it an institutional state of mind.

"Rome" was a metaphor.

or an omelette, as was suggested, could be used. I like one made with salsa.

The Greatful Dead made the comment, " ... meet the new boss, same as the old boss."

It's the ego they speak of as the boss. Or, it could be an omelette, or gasp it could be ZEN!!!!

That "Rome" is not(yet)built or un built.

Good news.

August 4, 2010 5:19 PM

Anonymous said...

MULTIPLE CHOICE DHARMA QUIZ

In May, Aitken Roshi pointedly asked Eido Shimano Roshi of Dai Boastsu Zendo to publicly answer accusations that he had violated the precepts for the past forty years. Since May a woman has come out publicly to reveal a relationship she had with Shimano Roshi in Dai Boastsu Zendo in the past two years. And in the past two weeks a dharma student of long standing in the Zen Studies Society also revealed an affair with the abbot during a time when she was married to a man who was also a student of abbot Shimano.

Tai San, aka Eido Sotai Muishitsu Shimano Roshi so far has said not one word in response to Roshi Aitken or the two women because:

- a. Being Japanese, he is too embarrassed to make a public statement;
- b. He is afraid more women will speak out of he makes any kind of admission;
- c. He has many duties as an abbot, including fundraising for the Dai Bosatsu San Mon gate. When completed, this gate will be a passage to his incomparable dharma teaching.
- d. He is simply depressed because his most recent dharma heir said that he, Roshi, was responsible for 80% in his close encounters with the second kind. Why didn't he say 24%, or even 15%? Even dharma heirs can be so stupid!
- e. Fundamentally, he is in a state of bliss, continuing to move freely in the unconditional realm and is waiting for Bob Aitken to transcend the relative realm. Perhaps they could meet halfway. At Benihana or Starbucks, when time permits?
- f. He has taken a short leave, looking at retirement communities that are far from Hawaii.
- g. He is working full bore on the koan "Hyakujo's possum". "If a possum plays dead, will it avoid falling into causation?"
- h. These days, Yoga takes up so much of his time. Ahhh.... those cute Yoga babes!

Please circle the correct answer.

If you feel you have a better answer, or answers, please submit to:
DharmatakpuzzlersZSS.net.

August 4, 2010 10:41 PM

Anonymous said...

I think I have another answer. He has a toothache.

August 5, 2010 6:07 AM

Anonymous said...

Dear Anonymous August 4, 2010 5:19 PM

In dwelling on the "Rome" metaphor, it seems you are avoiding presenting your thoughts on the real issue.

Please deal with the real issue: Why do you think that the ZSS Board needs to oust Shimano, but it will take a very long time, or why you really think it doesn't have to oust Shimano (thereby explaining the lack of urgency on your part), or why it can't.

At first I thought you simply lacked the urgency when you used the Rome metaphor as a way of saying it will take a very long time to oust Shimano, but, given your latest response, are we to take your use of the line "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss" from the the lyrics of the song "Won't Get Fooled Again" by Peter Townsend to really mean that it doesn't matter who the abbot of Zen Studies Society is? You switched gears and started to use that line to talk about "ego" and "ZEN!!!!" and "built and unbuilt." Your meaning and intent was not clear at all; kindly elaborate.

August 5, 2010 6:28 AM

Anonymous said...

Dear Ryushin

Like I said you've raised some interesting and important points about practice that need to be discussed elsewhere, but you are so correct:

"This blog is about Eido Shimano's abuse of people coupled with his addiction to power over dynamics and his not being present here front and come forth and make a statement in response to these accusations."

August 5, 2010 6:33 AM

Anonymous said...

d. He is simply depressed because his most recent dharma heir said that he, Roshi, was responsible for 80% in his close encounters with the second kind. Why didn't he say 24%, or even 15%?

Good question. Maybe Eido roshi kept a journal. Perhaps from this, it was a simple calculation. Turns out, going back through the score cards, that one in five was how it went. Because there were some wide awake, pajama peelin' party babes out to bag a roshi for their trophy wall as well.

August 5, 2010 7:49 AM

Anonymous said...

@Anonymous August 4, 2010 10:41 PM

“And in the past two weeks a dharma student of long standing in the Zen Studies Society also revealed an affair with the abbot during a time when she was married to a man who was also a student of abbot Shimano.”

For the sake of clarity, the “dharma student” referred to above is now a Shimano Dharma heir.

<http://ubercorp.com/blog/index.php/2010/07/zen-sitting-meditation/eido-shimanos-sex-scandal-part-n1/>

August 5, 2010 11:07 AM

Anonymous said...

They are asking for a hundred grand to build the idiotic Dai Bosatsu San Mon gate – like that absurdity is really needed in the town of Hardenburgh in the middle of nowhere. Perhaps it would be fitting for his Japanese theme park though?

The reality is, they will never do it. Having raised perhaps fifty grand Shimano probably figured he might just as well use the cash for a new Lexus as fitting his opulent lifestyle.

August 5, 2010 11:18 AM

Anonymous said...

"lacked the urgency when you used the Rome metaphor as a way of saying it will take a very long time to oust Shimano,"

I think that the time for urgency was missed.

He is "ousted" (as of July 4 2010) from the ZSS governing board and I do not care how this played out in the past.

If "ousted" means removed from DBZ and Shobo ji as abbott, I think it is necessary that it be done deliberately and with consideration for everyone, Eido Shimano included, involved.

IF "ousted" means dump him out on the street, I say no.

If this knot takes the ZSS board "a while" to resolve ... GOOD FOR THEM!

"it doesn't matter who the abbot of Zen Studies Society is?"

Not really. There will be many abbots.

I do think that Eido Shimano should not continue in the role of abbot at any monastery. I do think that to accomplish this the board has a real problem. I do think it best that the abbot at DBZ not fill that role at Shobo ji and I think no abbot should be seated on the ZSS governing board.

"Meet the new boss, same as the old boss" from the the lyrics of the song "Won't Get Fooled Again" by Peter Townsend

Thanks. I heard the GD sing it and assumed they wrote it. I did change gears at that point.

New boss old boss = same boss

Hierarchical institutions will always have a problem coping with "the boss" the "seniors" the "juniors" the "everyone else" and the attendant "egos" involved with holding high rank and/or the lack of such.

I do not think this will change with a change of leadership. The problems will, more likely than not, be different ones. But, only if the egos involved are self restrained, will it make any fundamental difference in whether or not the institution is functionally capable of compassion.

Power (and its use) comes with form and, as the form is made of fallibility, the "I am right and you are wrong" struggles for "equality of voice" will not go away as and when Eido Shimano exits the stage.

It is the Western idea of "equality of voice" that fundamentally energizes this struggle. It is now cast as a win or lose situation for ZSS and that, no matter what the outcome, will pound one more nail into the coffin of the traditional institution on the West.

Good? Bad? I don't know. Just my sense of how this will play out.

Again, a problem for the ZSS Board to grapple with, lose sleep over, and try to solve.

For what it's worth, I think they will do the best they can do.

August 5, 2010 1:33 PM

Anonymous said...

" ... that he, Roshi, was responsible for 80% in his close encounters with the second kind. Why didn't he say 24%, or even 15%?"

Would it not follow, if 24% or 15% were the percentage used, that Eido Shimano was not the primary instigator of the sexual liasons and power abuse? Is not 80% a "good number" in the case being presented on this blog?

August 5, 2010 1:41 PM

Anonymous said...

Dear Anon August 5, 2010 1:33 PM

Personally, I find your apparent overall lackadaisical acceptance of the pervasive dysfunction that continues to go on at ZSS disheartening at best. Actually I find it sickening!

If this is the best we can expect from ZSS then I think the Maha Sangha or practitioners of good conscience should advise complete avoidance of the organization.

August 6, 2010 7:26 AM

genkaku said...

Thanks, Roshi, for all the hard work and honesty over the years. May you be at peace.

Gassho.

August 6, 2010 8:47 AM

Anonymous said...

From Spike--Regarding Eido Roshi stepping down: Believe during the last two decades ER stepped down from accepting new students twice at different times, on the occasion of naming two different dharma heirs who were then residents at DBZ.

If you don't want to just whine/gossip/back-bench-bomb on this blog, try contacting the ZSS Ethics Committee directly at zssethicscom@gmail.com with your thoughtful and compassionate observations/suggestions on the relevant matter. I did and got a prompt and informative reply back from a guy I don't know/never met. Know that they are set to consult with a well-respected ethics institute. Know that they are critically reviewing their bylaws and ways to improve their board. Help them. Help their consultants. Thereby you help all involved, including ER, whom you must believe especially needs it.

August 6, 2010 9:27 AM

Ryushin Malone said...

Dearest Anon August 6, 2010 7:26 AM

Agreed Completely. Stay Away.

Dearest Rodaishi, So long, Dharma Brother. Thank you for all your wonderful work over so many years. Your work will last forever. My deepest sympathy and condolences to the Aitken family, friends, students and Sangha.

August 6, 2010 10:33 AM

Anonymous said...

How trustworthy are the board and its derivative, ZSS Ethics Committee, after the repeated offenses committed by ER over so many years? I wonder, other than bylaw, why do we need outside consultant or adviser? If we cannot solve this by ourselves, we better close the shop.

August 6, 2010 10:34 AM

REDDirt said...

"the pervasive dysfunction that continues to go on at ZSS disheartening at best."

Please. Right now, what is it that "continues to go on" at ZSS? You must have very good sources of intelligence to be so disheartened.

Speaking personally. Why does it "sicken" you that I simply think it best to wait and see what DOES happen at ZSS? Why is it so offensive that it well may take more time and compassion than you seem to think necessary to resolve this the best as it can be resolved?

I feel sadness that you (and many others) are so angry and unwilling to trust that all is well just as it is. All is perfect just as it is.

This is our refuge.

August 6, 2010 11:14 AM

Ryushin Malone said...

@REDDirt

"You must have very good sources of intelligence to be so disheartened."

That's for sure...

"I feel sadness that you (and many others) are so angry and unwilling to trust that all is well just as it is. All is perfect just as it is."

All is NOT well just as it is here. You are enabling a man whom has cause thousands, thousands of people damage over four decades! And all you got is, trust all is well and "perfect" just as it is. NO! I don't think so.

Despite my duties as a Zen monk to refrain from anger, I have a right to be upset. Especially when it involves my family, all the people hurt and myself. It is my duty to speak the Truth and uphold it. This is NOT all OK, as it is.

August 6, 2010 12:00 PM

Anonymous said...

Once I heard that Dharma never deceives.

Once I heard that a Zen Master planned to refute the allegation of his sexual misconducts and to proclaim he was clean as white-silk, and out of sudden prior to proclamation a female student acknowledged her intimate relationship with this master.

And also another story came up (Anon July 2, 2010 3:02 AM)

"The guidelines did not stop a Shimano Dharma heir not long ago from convincing a woman to leave her husband and small children to become his 'student' and relocate to Dai Bosatsu, nor did they stop him from initiating a sexual liaison with the woman while in residence at DBZ."

Does "not long ago" mean "less than five years"? are they the same event as given by Anon August 5, 2010 11:07 AM, or different sickening events (one occurred long time ago and similar pattern occurred recently)?

Be that as it may;

A Zen Master planned to deceive, yet Dharma reveals the truth. Indeed, Dharma never deceives.

My three bows to the women who bravely exposed their situation. They sacrificed for the future Zen students.

August 6, 2010 2:02 PM

Gomyo said...

Ryushin Malone and Genkaku. If you spend as much time on the zafu as you do on the internet you would be enlightened right now!

August 6, 2010 2:29 PM

Ryushin Malone said...

If you were half the man, you'd be using your real name and not LYING, impersonating a dear friend of mine, Gomyo. But You don't mind lying about yourself, do you? You've already gone this far enough, why not keep lying. Live well with that.

August 6, 2010 7:20 PM

Witness said...

Anonymous July 12 said...

"I would be interested at this point if folks are up to attempting to define what we mean by abuse." Yes, I think that's a good idea too.

Anonymous July 23, said...

"This is the modern world, and *Adults have affairs*" You're on the wrong blog; we're talking about a priest in a religious charity here, a.k.a. a church.

What follows below is a copy/paste. If you don't consider Buddhism to be a religion, and some zen buddhists don't, then perhaps you can think in terms of how your father should behave towards your sister, or a friend towards your wife.

...

What is sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship?

Sexual abuse happens when someone in a ministerial role (clergy, religious or lay) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, employee, student or counseling client in the ministerial relationship.

Sexual abuse can include physical contact from the person in the ministerial role, such as:

- Sexual touch and "accidental" touch of sexual areas of the body
- Tickling and playful aggression that seem uncomfortable to you
- A prolonged hug when a brief hug is customary behavior
- Kissing on the lips when a kiss on the cheek would be appropriate
- Pressing up against your body when hugging
- An inappropriate gift from your religious leader (such as lingerie)

- Sexual intercourse with your religious leader

Sexual abuse can also include verbal behavior initiated by a person in a ministerial role when such behavior sexualizes a relationship. Examples include:

- Innuendo or sexual talk
- Suggestive comments
- Tales of his or her sexual exploits or experiences
- Questions about the intimate details of your relationships
- Looking for sympathy about his or her partner's sexual inadequacies

...

Why is it wrong?

Sexual contact or sexualized behavior within the ministerial relationship is a violation of professional ethics. There is a difference in power between a person in a ministerial role and a member of his or her congregation or a counselee. Because of this difference in power, you cannot give meaningful consent to the sexual relationship.

Individuals usually seek counseling or support from their religious leader at times of stress or crisis. During these times, you are emotionally vulnerable and can be taken advantage of by a religious leader.

...

Is sexual contact between a religious leader and me ever okay?

Meaningful consent can occur when two people are relatively equal in power and when fear, coercion or manipulation is completely absent from their relationship. Clergy who are seeking a romantic relationship can do so outside their own congregations. If a religious leader becomes interested in dating or romance with a member of his or her congregation (though this is complicated and not advisable), the clergyperson must remove him/herself from a ministerial role in that person's life before ethically pursuing a relationship of this nature.

Questions that need to be asked to evaluate if it is possible to pursue this type of romantic relationship include:

- Was the ministerial relationship minimal in nature (no counseling involved)?
- Is the religious leader willing to remove him or herself from the ministerial relationship?
- Is the religious leader willing to be open about the relationship with the congregation?

...

Mr. and Mrs. Eido Shimano, their clergy, and their Board of Directors know **all** of this, and they hide their shame behind secrecy and lies.

August 6, 2010 8:23 PM

gomyo said...

For the record, the above comment was not made by me. While it is possible that there is another gomyo around, it is more likely someone who doesn't want to identify themselves using my name to stir up trouble. I do enough of that on my own. Please stop using my name. To avoid confusion in the future I will log in before commenting so that imposters using my name will be easy to identify. If your name really is gomyo as well, get in touch.

August 6, 2010 8:34 PM

REddirt said...

Ryushin,

"You are enabling a man whom has cause thousands, thousands of people damage over four decades!"

I am enabling no one. I choose no side in this because there is nothing to choose.

"And all you got is, trust all is well and "perfect" just as it is."

That is all I've got. Trust is all that is necessary. Trust comes from faith and faith comes from experience. There is experienced in this refuge that which underlies, cuts through, all of this. This is what I mean by all is well and perfect just as it is. This does not negate anyone's suffering but it does help in dealing with it.

"I have a right to be upset."

Yes, you do. You also have the right to be purple with green stripes. As a Buddhist monk you have a duty to harm no being. You have a duty to embody the way of Buddha. So does Eido Shimano but that is not the point. You have no real control over him or any of his behavior, past present or future; you have control only of yourself and your behavior.

"It is my duty to speak the Truth and uphold it.

Perhaps. What is the Truth and how do you know that you speak it?

I respond only because I wonder if you do violence to yourself in this, I wonder if you do harm to your being, although you may not see it so.

Over this violence, you do have control and you do have a very clear duty to uphold.

August 6, 2010 9:04 PM

witness said...

A luminous man has honored our lives.

Aloha Roshi, nine bows.

August 6, 2010 10:09 PM

Anonymous said...

I had an abusive and alcoholic uncle who regularly beat his wife and children. (This is going back 30+ years -- before there were significant social support systems for such situations and people who were willing to avail themselves of it.) Nevertheless my aunt never left him. She bore 13 of his children. She died soon after giving birth to the last child. As the 3 oldest children reached maturity they formed a natural group that tried various things to stop their father e. g. get relatives involved, the boys even beat him up. Nothing worked. They couldn't change him and eventually they all left. The next natural actually tried defending the father for a while, then claimed that could handle him, but they too began to disrespect him as well and left , and so on. Out of the 13 Only four went to the father's funeral. Some of them are in turn have similar issues now that they are adults.

There are so many parallels to what happened to that family and what's happened to the Sangha at ZSS I was amazed when the comparison occurred to me!

Those that don't see the serious and still urgent problem with ETS and ZSS consider reading about dysfunctional families and dysfunctional organizations you might at least understand the point of view of those who see the problem as serious and urgent. Perhaps not, but you will have some useful information and might ask yourself and others some questions.

Those that do see the problems, we need to recognize that just expressing anger and frustration at those who don't is not what's going help much.

May we find skillful means.

Peace.

August 6, 2010 10:12 PM

Ryushin Malone said...

@REDdirt

Paulo Freire challenges us with, "Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."

August 7, 2010 7:07 AM

Anonymous said...

Anon@August6,2010 10:12pm

"May we find skillful means."

Up column there is a suggestion that people contact the ZSS Ethics Committee directly with thoughts concerns ideas etc.

I did so yesterday. Asked a pointed question and got an immediate response from a committee member. The response directly addressed my concern and answered the question. No ducking the issue involved, no changing the subject.

August 7, 2010 7:42 AM

Bobby said...

Will Eido Shimano continue as abbot? Has this question been asked by anyone? I noticed ES is scheduled to be giving teisho and dokusan for golden wind sesshin in Sept. So, it appears he endures.

August 7, 2010 1:42 PM

Anonymous said...

From Spike--"they (ER et al) hide their shame behind secrecy and lies." - Anonymous 8/6/10 7:20PM. Years ago when confronted with accusations of misbehavior, ER admitted "I have a problem." Probably, at least in part, why he stepped down from accepting new students after naming two dharma heirs (Junpo & Jiro) who at different times resided at DBZ.

I have personally inquired about these matters with Sangha members, including current board members, whilst an occasional sesshin attendant at DBZ, and they never lied or kept secret. (I have/would never ask the long-suffering Aiho-san.) As for confronting ER, his admission was enough for me. I'm a sinner too.

Researching a potential teacher is part of a due diligence process that is a sine qua non. As AR states in his letter to ER at the head of this blog, there is a 40-year history (books, articles, pointed dharma talks by *eminent roshis* also available on recording, internet archives, etc.) of concerns about ER's relationships. Why anyone would ignore/discount this readily available developing history if it was a potential concern needs to be explained by those very students.

August 7, 2010 2:59 PM

REddirt said...

Ryushin,

"Paulo Freire challenges us with, "Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."

Good point. Saying I will not choose a side is not the same as saying I am taking a "neutral" position or "I wash my hands" if these words means nothing but the status quo at ZSS going forward.

That is not acceptable and it is not what is happening.

I believe this struggle will play out quite quickly. The pressure on the board to resolve this is intense and it is being generated from inside the organization as well as coming from the outside.

I choose to wait and see what happens in the next few months because what the board does next matters; to them, to the organization they represent, and, as you say, to all who care about a voice for all.

Because of this, I wish them to make a good job of it, not a hasty one.

We shall see now how it goes.

August 7, 2010 3:23 PM

Anonymous said...

From Spike--"Will ER continue as abbot? ..." Why in the world wouldn't you ASK DBZ or the ZSS ethics committee, and then get back to us??

August 7, 2010 3:29 PM

Anonymous said...

From Spike--"What is sexual abuse in the ministerial relationship?" from Witless, 8/6/10, 7:20 PM. You left off the attribution for your cut-and-paste: The Faith Trust Institute. What a coinckydink! How prescient of you! The very organization ZSS has chosen to consult with, and who will probably be using those exact criteria named by you to evaluate this matter, while you accuse them (ZSS) of lies and secrecy!

The shame is on you.

August 7, 2010 3:44 PM

Komyo said...

What brought 50 years of zenbhidism in America us?

Websites like hoodiemonks, useless blogs and other nonsense! I think it is time to sit and pay no attention too clowns as Ryushin Malone!

August 7, 2010 4:39 PM

Anonymous said...

Please feel free to sit all you want Komyo/Gomyo(the phony one)...

August 7, 2010 5:08 PM

Anonymous said...

Komyo/Gomyo/Ekyo

August 7, 2010 5:09 PM

Anonymous said...

Will ER remain as an abbot? Yes. Will he give teisho and dokusan? Yes. Will zen students hear his Teisho? Yes. Will they listen? Mostly not. ZSS board works hard to resolve this issue - the position of ER (which is so complex and entangled). In my personal view, the board should pick the vice-abbot and slowly relieve ER from his abbotship and give him a kind of emiritus status.

The fact is board and ZSS members cannot decide with a haste, because the atmosphere is toxic.

August 7, 2010 10:58 PM

Anonymous said...

If ER is allowed to give dokusan even after what he had been doing was revealed, it is equivalent to, officially and publicly, declaring ZSS has no problem with his conduct.

If a person is found to be a child molester and if you still allow him to play with children, aren't you liable for the very judgment?

What's a shame!

The ZSS board should take the gravity of the ER's criminal conduct more seriously, putting higher priority on the issue to merely keeping the ZSS in disgrace.

August 8, 2010 6:31 AM

The Archivist said...

Two new documents have been posted to the www.shimanoarchives.com page. These are very recent letters from Jiro Andy Afable, Shimano's second Dharma heir, addressed to the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors.

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDF's/20100603_Jiro_Board.pdf

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDF's/20100729_Jiro_Board.pdf

August 8, 2010 10:35 AM

The Archivist said...

I will no longer post public announcements of the addition of new material to the [shimanoarchive.com](http://www.shimanoarchive.com) site, nor will I engage in dialog here, or elsewhere, concerning the policies and procedures of the University of Hawaii Archives or the content of archive documents.

August 9, 2010 1:46 AM

Anonymous said...

Are the University of Hawaii Archives, which seemed to be the papers of the late Robert Aitken Roshi regarding his interactions with Eido Shimano, Roshi something other than the www.shimanoarchive.com?

Who is this Archivist, someone from the University of Hawaii or someone from the [shiamnoarchive](http://www.shimanoarchive.com)?

I ask because it is confusing.

August 9, 2010 9:57 AM

Anonymous said...

The www.shimanoarchives.com site lists excerpts from only the second of the two letters from Andy Afable (Jiro) to the Zen Studies Society. These two letters were made public August 8, 2010 10:35am (see above).

Can not seem to find the first one (605) now. What just happened?

August 9, 2010 10:23 AM

Anonymous said...

www.shimanoarchive.com is a website containing documents about Eido Tai Shimano retrieved from the University of Hawaii Archive. The "Archivist appears to be Kobutsu Malone (it's his address and phone number on the site).

August 9, 2010 11:55 AM

Anonymous said...

If there is a concern that Mr. Shimano increased his personal finances, like his townhouse and bank accounts, through illegitimate means, a forensic accountant should be called in to get to the origins and legalities of any financial transactions.

August 9, 2010 2:00 PM

Anonymous said...

" ... a forensic accountant should be called in to get to the origins and legalities of any financial transactions."

Who will do that? Even right now it is not clear who will pursue legal proceeding against ES sexual abuse.

August 9, 2010 5:39 PM

Anonymous said...

The State Attorney General certainly could accomplish such an investigation.

August 9, 2010 6:58 PM

Anonymous said...

"The State Attorney General certainly could accomplish such an investigation."

The next question: will they?

August 10, 2010 7:36 AM

Anonymous said...

@ Anonymous 7:36 Am

If enough people file complaints they will. Complaint form are here:

<http://www.charitiesnys.com/pdfs/char030.pdf>

August 11, 2010 1:18 AM

Anonymous said...

You're all fucking nuts.

In 70 years, as yet another mystic impenetrable guy observed, everyone and everything you love will be gone.

Quit your stinking, thoughtful responses, and go out and do something for someone besides yourself (not that you've actually been doing anything for yourself with your fancy denial - at least fat, vacationing Republicans get to look at something interesting while on vacations).

Sitting on cushions for decades doesn't teach a child a language, vaccinate anyone, help a teenager with a learning disability to get a job, or save a species from extinction.

I look back on my decade of "practice" with just regret, period. Your desperation to rationalize outrageous behavior (per some "Dr." above) or to mistake your brain having the wiring doing something that many just can't do anymore than YOU can run a 4 minute mile is just so ... pathetic. YOUR ALTERED BRAIN ≠ INSIGHT INTO REALITY.

Aitken didn't cross over to anywhere. He's dead. And so will you be in a few years.

Decide what you will do with your time accordingly.

And you bet your sweet-asses I'm staying anonymous. Enough blah-blah-blah masquerading as inquiry for a lifetime already, thanks.

Ciao!

August 11, 2010 11:20 PM

Glenn Webb said...

I have only recently learned of two events that make me sad, but in very different ways. First, I mourn the death, but the very nearly-selfless life, of Robert Aitken Roshi. My sadness comes from the end of Aitken's steady influence for peace and justice in our world. I pray that his disciples (and there are many) will continue his legacy.

The second event that makes me sad is the recent public flap over Shimano Eido Roshi's unrestrained love of women (just Google his name or the name of his Daibosatsu Zendo.) His latest sexual dalliance has resulted in him (and his wife) stepping down from the board of the New York Zendo. Unfortunately, Eido Roshi is not alone among Japanese Zen teachers outside of Japan in seducing or being seduced by his female students.

I turn 75 this year. At least fifty of those years, part of them, were spent training in Zen monasteries in Japan. As a serious student of Japan and Buddhism, I witnessed the considerable restraint that "parishioners" (danka, in Japanese) impose on the Buddhist leaders in their neighborhoods.

Those restraints come from rules that make it absolutely forbidden to father a child with a woman and refuse to marry her. I know of dozens of Japanese priests who have broken that rule and who have been summarily dismissed from their training temples.

There is no similar rule in Japanese temples governing the conduct of a married priest who has sex outside of marriage. But all of the priests who have done the latter have done so with a professional bar-girl, geisha, etc. I know of only two priests who have had sex with a female STUDENT.

To be clear, there are no female students in the main Zen priest-training temples in Japan. The two instances I mention were foreign women who came to the priests asking to train with them privately. This is a post-war phenomenon, and similar to the situation we have in Zen centers outside of Japan.

I think the sexual misconduct that has gone on in American and European Zen centers has taken place because the Japanese teachers have no parishioners to restrain their sexual urges. They have been treated like holy sages, gurus, whose every whim is taken very seriously. They could not easily get away with their behavior in their own country.

What I have learned from all of this cultural and religious cross-breeding is how fragile our lives are. And how easily we damage them. Out of ignorance or selfish motives we fail to fulfill the very tenets of the Buddhadharma when we take ourselves so seriously that we feel we can tear down accepted social standards of behavior.

Zen Buddhism seems especially guilty of allowing contradictory behavior to seem enlightened. But even Tibetan priests who left their Tibetan communities to teach foreigners have similarly been allowed to act upon their sexual urges with impunity.

As I approach my last years in this amazing dance of life and death, marveling in the self-and-other trips we all must take, I can only hope that Zen and other forms of Buddhism will survive this crisis and not be characterized by it in Wikipedia forever.

GTW

August 13, 2010 5:30 PM

Anonymous said...

Hello GTW,

Regarding your statement "I think the sexual misconduct that has gone on in American and European Zen centers has taken place because the Japanese teachers have no parishioners to restrain their sexual urges."

I hope your primary intent is to empower sangha, if so I applaud you. However, I also hope that that it's only your phrasing which, to me at least, makes it sound too much like weak teachers are to bear too little responsibility for their actions; as though they are passive victims of their passions. Further, you make no mention of actions on the part of the larger sangha which would include the weak teacher's master and his (or her) peers. Perhaps you can elaborate here or on your blog, <http://sugoisekai.blogspot.com/>

BTW -- You have an interesting blog:

Sugoi Sekai - Wonderful World

<http://sugoisekai.blogspot.com/>

I enjoyed reading your essay on the term Roshi and it's use.

I have never read or heard some aspects of succession that you assert with respect to Rinzai Zen Buddhism. Also the section on Dharma names is very interesting as well.

It is good to have a true senior practitioner around who is willing to share and express himself collegially.

August 14, 2010 7:27 AM

Anonymous said...

@GTW

On your blog you translate "Roshi" as (老子), "Old Child" - Nelson 4696 and 1281. However within the Zen tradition the term is conventionally written (老師), "Old Teacher" - Nelson 4696 and 1562.

Care to explain the discrepancy?

August 14, 2010 2:57 PM

Anonymous said...

From Genkaku blog:

ZSS is an independent non-membership corporation, there is no formal affiliation with any Japanese Zen center but there is informal relationship with some Japanese Temple (with Shogen-ji for example). Also ES in 2004 received prestigious award from Bukkyo Dendai Kyokai (BDK) as excellent Zen teacher (before this case being opened to the public - so BDK is also deceived).

Any Japanese organizations are usually very sensitive to complaints and they will listen to us if they are notified. Here are the address of BDK in Japan and its reps. in America.

Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai
3-14, 4-chome
Shiba Minato-ku
Tokyo 108-0014 Japan
Tel. (03) 3455-5851

Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai and
Numata Center for Buddhist Translation & Research
2620 Warring Street
Berkeley, CA 94704
Tel: (510) 843-4128 Fax: (510) 845-3409

Regarding Yamakawa, he is a very nice and honest Roshi. I think somebody should notify him (Shogen-ji) before he is dragged into this poisonous swamp.

I am also sorry with current board members. I cannot blame them all. Some were elected recently but before this case opened to public, hence they did not know the depth of the problems. Yuho for example is still new (look at the year he was appointed as a board member). My feeling is that Yuho is also knew 'member' of ZSS so he did not know either the depth of previous scandals. This case could drag his professional career down. Contrary to common perceptions, Genjo is totally pissed off with ES. There is a writing in this blog that mentioned one of the member was a sex partner of ES before. It is shocking,

because it directly points to the only female member of the board. She should resign first!

Attorney General will not move if there are no complaints from any victims. Even if there are complaints usually they move slowly unless media (newspaper) takes this issue.

Do you think BP would respond seriously about oil disaster in the Gulf without media coverage? Do you think Toyota would respond promptly and responsibly about the brake problem unless media reported it? One should not underestimate the power of the fourth column of democracy, the media.

Regarding the non-membership organization, certainly this will make members of Shobo-ji more mad because they pay monthly due for ZSS membership. Is it the reason why there is no annual financial report? One can google Wikipedia and look for keyword Chester Carlson and find two references about financial matters that made Doris pissed off with ZSS.

One more thing that made Shobo-ji members mad. ES in his teisho always emphasized zen students need to be honest and have gratitude. Yet in current situation, ES deceives everybody and feels no remorse (think and act as usual). He does not give an example of gratitude being supported financially and spiritually by Shobo-ji members, and acts as if this sangha is expendable. True unfortunate. If I were ES I would resign (or take a very long long sabbatical).

August 15, 2010 5:56 PM

Witness said...

On August 11, 2010 Glenn Webb said...

“...Shimano Eido Roshi’s unrestrained love of women ...His latest sexual dalliance ... seducing or being seduced...”

... As a serious student of Japan and Buddhism, I witnessed the considerable restraint that “parishioners” (danka, in Japanese) impose on the Buddhist leaders in their neighborhoods.

Those restraints come from rules that make it absolutely forbidden to father a child with a woman and refuse to marry her. I know of dozens of Japanese priests who have broken that rule and who have been summarily dismissed from their training temples.

There is no similar rule in Japanese temples governing the conduct of a married priest who has sex outside of marriage. But all of the priests who have done the latter have done so with a professional bar-girl, geisha, etc. I know of only two priests who have had sex with a female STUDENT.

To be clear, there are no female students in the main Zen priest-training temples in Japan. The two instances I mention were foreign women who came to the priests asking to train with them privately.”

...

Thank you for clarifying some of the moral standards that are applied to Buddhist leaders in Japan. Your statement that you “know of only two priests who have had sex with a female STUDENT”, finds resonance with the statements of Mr. Shimano’s former student Margot Wilke, a strong 87 years old at the time of her 1998 interview. “He thought Americans were stupid and had no bones about saying it. We were crude and uncivilized. He thought nothing of women.”

These past ten days, with the passing of Robert Aitken, I am still quite concerned that no American intercultural voice will emerge to enliven his shoes. And thank you very much for your comments on this blog and for setting us straight on the standards that Mr. Shimano applies to himself.

Having said that, Dr. Webb, with kindness I must say that we have progressed well beyond the use of biased phrases like “love of women” and “sexual dalliances” and “seduce”; the purpose of these phrases is to obscure the destructive nature of clergy sexual abuse. For at least twenty years, the words that are used to describe these cruel trespasses are “sexual intercourse with the religious leader” and “sexual abuse” and “a lack of meaningful consent to the sexual act”.

It is self inconsistent, Dr. Webb, to say that priests who sexually abuse their students are outcasts, but to preface the rule with excuses that Mr. Shimano is “being seduced”. Fathers do not have ‘dalliances’ with their daughters; priests do not have ‘dalliances’ with their parishioners. Fathers who engage in sexual intercourse with their daughters do not possess an “unrestrained love of women”; same for priests. These are heinous acts against women and against their families and churches, and the correct terminology is “sexual abuse”.

But to return to my debt, thank you again for shedding your light on this page. Mr. Shimano is a crafty old liar who continues to fill people's minds with disinformation and incompetent training, and your pieces of truth are sincerely appreciated.

...

Three days before Aitken Roshi's death at the age of 93, he was interviewed by a journalist and the interview was taped. The journalist asked Mr. Aitken about his 46 year effort to help the stream of men, women and children who have been, explicitly or through their surrogates or through their parents, victims of the disastrous consequences of Mr. Shimano's sexual abuse and the sexual abuses by some of his five "dharma heirs". The collateral damage is in the thousands of victims.

The journalist moved through his line of questioning, "...to be so interpersonally touched by it, and to be aware that it is one of the unfortunate by-products of Zen in the West, this one instance of..."

And Mr. Aitken stopped him right there with a forthright rebuke:

"It is not a by-product of Zen in the West. It is the by-product of a criminal mind."

Attach:

1998 Interview with Margot Wilke:

<http://www.cuke.com/Cucumber%20Project/interviews/wilkie.html>

August 17, 2010 9:03 AM

Anonymous said...

The audio recording an excerpt from Aitken Roshi's last interview is here:

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com/Xindex.html#papa>

August 17, 2010 3:28 PM

Anonymous said...

anyone know if a transcript of entire interview is available anywhere?

August 18, 2010 8:32 PM

Anonymous said...

I must say I feel that Eido Roshi is getting somewhat scapegoated here. Not that he isn't guilty of really bad behavior, but I have been a member of 3 New York Zendo's, and I'm pretty sure the other 2 Roshis were guilty of having sex with their students too. I just wonder why no one seems to mention them. Not only was one Roshi (a woman) probably having a relationship with a student, but she went overboard giving her all sorts of special privileges, much to the shock and amazement of most of her students. This woman

student appeared out of nowhere (I had been sitting there about 5 years) and got a PRIVATE jukai ceremony (up at her hometown in Maine) after spending NO time in the Zendo, followed by a Tokodo ceremony about 6 months later. The Roshi announced that she was going to break up with her long time girlfriend, never mentioning why. Obviously, we all knew what was going on. The other Roshi (who died recently) was an older man who basically dumped his long time partner (also a student) for another woman (also a student). Please. Let's be fair here.

August 20, 2010 11:42 AM

Anonymous said...

It's hit the New York Times:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/21/us/21beliefs.html?_r=1

August 20, 2010 5:38 PM

Hollis Meyer-deLancey said...

After reading about this situation in the New York Times, I found this web site. I wonder why the primary concern is not with taking care of the people who were abused by Eido Roshi?

Eido Roshi, by virtue of his position as a teacher, was able to engage in quid-pro-quo exchanges of sexual favors with his students, with or without their consent. Such exchange is, by definition, sexual abuse. When one sits down on a cushion or enters into dokusan she places all of her trust, her spiritual and psychological vulnerability, all of her power and self determination into the hands of the teacher. There can be no mind to mind transmission without a student opening herself in this way, no dokusan.

People who are vulnerable to such exploitation are extremely trusting and innocent. An experienced abuser is able to identify such people and manipulate them so that all their power is taken away. Their psyche is violated, they are emotionally and psychologically emasculated such that they will probably never be able to return to the state of openness, trust, freedom, spontaneity, creativity, vitality, freedom with which they approached the teacher. They are traumatized by these events similar to someone who has been abused in a war or perhaps slavery, especially if they are in a social situation where the abuse and power of the abuser is reinforced by others and the victim's situation is not acknowledged or is even perpetuated by her treatment by others and her status within the group.

Such a victim needs endless amounts of support, therapy, compassion, love, acceptance, affirmation, empathy, acknowledgement, empowerment, understanding to even have a chance of returning to a state of envisioning a possibility of happiness. This is our primary responsibility as Buddhists, human beings, teachers, transmitted teachers, dharma heirs, sangha members, Board members, corporate officers, trustees of corporate

assets, women, men, sentient beings. Why isn't this the primary concern of all people involved in this dialogue? All of this other stuff is garbage if it hurt even one human being and should be forgotten about, it means nothing. Every person's assets. strength, position of authority, position on the Board, ability to vote on Boards, ability to speak, convince, engage in dialogue, take legal action, write articles, letters, cook food, give massages, sing songs, make videos, twitter, should go out to these women to love, support, affirm, empower, agree, apologize, care for them in whatever way they need. H.

August 21, 2010 7:52 PM

Anonymous said...

Do not assume that such work is not taking place. It is not going to be talked about in a public internet blog however for obvious reasons.

August 22, 2010 6:43 AM

Anonymous said...

True we should take care of the victims, but how is about the abuser? Will we tolerate another victims? In other words, should we allow or even encourage wars so that we can practise compassion to the victims? This unfortunate event is like two face of a coin, we should take care of both sides, the victims and the abuser.

gassho

August 22, 2010 6:07 PM

genkaku said...

Some cannot see themselves in need of help despite all the evidence offered. Compassion (in the super-duper altruism sense) can strike such people as invasive and uninformed ... but also as useful to their self-serving ends.

August 23, 2010 2:03 AM

Anonymous said...

The most compassionate way to take care of the abuser is to first place him/her in a position where he/she can not further abuse people.

August 23, 2010 2:09 AM

Anonymous said...

Anonymous August 20, 2010 11:42 AM wrote:

"I'm pretty sure the other 2 Roshis were guilty of having sex with their students too."

You make a good point, but your examples do not seem to be indicate that there was an intolerable situation.

The main problem with Eido we are addressing is that he frequently used his position and in particular the Dokusan (Soto: Daisan) Room to seduce and even sexually violate numerous women.

Isn't that of a completely different magnitude than what you wrote other teachers did?

Re: "PRIVATE jukai ceremony (up at her hometown in Maine) after spending NO time in the Zendo, followed by a Tokodo ceremony about 6 months later."

The private jukai and the quick Tokodo sure sound wrong. Can you provide names and more details?

"The other Roshi (who died recently) was an older man who basically dumped his long time partner (also a student) for another woman (also a student). Please. Let's be fair here."

Also, sounds like something that needed to be addressed. But in this case the teacher is dead. Perhaps you can contact the former lover someday to get some clarity about the situation.

The issue is what is reasonable to expect from non-celibate teachers who wish to be able to find relationships from within the immediate sangha. The sangha may need to allow for some understanding and compassion regarding handling these relationships; I am not sure that banning such relationships is going to work. Sangha with non-celibate teachers who seek out relationships within the sangha are going to be presented with a number of problems. But they shouldn't be unsurmountable. They should not be much more problematic than say the relationships of a minister or a rabbi with a member of their respective congregations.

But accelerated advancement should not be tolerated by a sangha as they will be seen as wrong and will cast doubt on the entire practice unless their is a real reason. What would be reasonable? Case by case is the only answer.

Perhaps others have clear insights to share and, perhaps, a better venue in which to share them.

August 23, 2010 9:40 AM

Anonymous said...

BTW -- Regarding Shimano these are the type of things we are concerned about:

<http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/2010/02/eido-tai-shimano.html?showComment=1266809003070#c710866874571087286>

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDF's/19820400R_Zen_Seduction.html

Again, it seem to me, at least, that sexual advances such as the letter and the article describe are not in the same league as what you refer to regarding the other roshis. While in those case there was most likely sexual relationships with students, but I read both of those cases as rather normal serial monogamous relationships which may not have ended well not as habitual sexual abuse of students; but, if you think so, perhaps you should validate your feeling and thinking, then contact someone, or, in some way, do something.

August 23, 2010 2:48 PM

Anonymous said...

To August 23, 2010 9:40

I think the rule of the game is honesty and non-manipulative relation.

We cannot prevent or forbid a roshi falling in love with a student. Yet this Roshi has to be open to the sangha, otherwise rumours and gossips, jealousy etc will arise and poison the sangha. To be open and honest, and usually the sangha will understand.

Non-manipulative in the sense that this love comes into being because of mutual affection and no intimidation involved. Non-manipulative in the sense that a roshi cannot easily divorce existing partner just to pursue his/her libido just seeing new attractive members. It is difficult to write down, but one can easily detect if the relation is manipulative.

Of course as a sangha member we need to understand that his/her partner will be

special for the roshi, yet at the same time a Roshi needs to restraint giving excessive authority to his/her partner related to sangha's matters. The keyword is 'excessive'.

Gassho

August 24, 2010 7:23 AM

genkaku said...

I would have thought the key word was (and I know it's a can of babbling worms) "love."

August 24, 2010 4:29 PM

Anonymous said...

Stop calling Shimano "roshi" if you are critical of him. "roshi" SHOULD be, as it traditionally is, a voluntary honorific used as a sign of respect to an ELDERLY teacher. It is NOT a title, though that is how scads of American teachers, and too many Japanese, have come to recently use it.

I personally feel that the term is almost abused beyond repair, but am at a loss thusfar as to what else to use. But after spending a week with at 85 year old teacher who was one of the most lovely people I've ever met, I naturally called her roshi. it fit.

August 26, 2010 8:54 PM

Jack said...

Two pertinent items from the Genkaku blog:

<http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com/2010/02/eido-tai-shimano.html?commentPage=3>

Anonymous said...

Not too long ago the ZSS posted a list of the names of the members of their Board of Directors on their website ethical guidelines page. Some time later that list was removed without comment.

Yesterday an "insider" at ZSS revealed: Allegedly three Board members have resigned including the Board Secretary and Treasurer. One of the people to resign was Seigan Ed Glassing, a monk and long time supporter of the Shimanos.

August 28, 2010 4:15 AM

and

Anonymous said...

The resignees might consider that they are not officially off the Board for at least sixty days after their notification of intent according to the bylaws. The latest copy of the ZSS bylaws available to the public on the www.shimanoarchives.com site is from 2003. It states:

Section 4 -- Resignations

Any director of the Society may resign at any time by giving written notice to both the President and to the Secretary of the Society, or if they are unavailable, to two (2) directors. Such resignation shall take effect in no less than sixty (60) days from the date upon which it is given.

It might behoove the three erstwhile Board members to reconsider and withdraw their letters of intent to resign; they can still sue ZSS for dissolution of the Board or appointment of a receiver based on deadlock. It might be helpful for them to consult with counsel since by announcing their intent to resign they appear to be holding to righteous ethical standards.

The remaining Board members are likely deeply conflicted. The recent revelation that two of them sit on the three person "ethics" committee should raise big red flags to anyone considering approaching this "ethics committee." This "ethics committee." is just a cover name for appearances, another smoke screen. Anything that anyone reveals to them is likely to be used in defense of Shimano who the Board is allowing to remain as Abbot. Anything that is revealed to the committee in confidence is likely to wind up plastered on some random public blog in an effort to mitigate Shimano's transgressions or paint a survivor in an unfavorable light however slight.

Stay away from this sham... talk to an attorney; let your counsel deal with the ZSS Board.

August 28, 2010 6:01 AM

August 28, 2010 6:08 AM

Anonymous said...

I see that my post of a few hours hasn't been reviewed yet so maybe these additional questions about how the ZSS Ethics Committee works could be added to it. It's fine to even discard the previous post and just use this one, whatever the moderator thinks.

Is the ZSS Ethics Committee only for complaints that fall within a certain time frame? And is it only for people who still go to the zendo right now? And is it only for people who could file a complaint with the police, say for a smallish sexual assault that's probably a misdemeanor (fine\$ or short jail term)? Or even biggish, whatever, but you know what I'm saying. How recent does the abuse have to be?

And since government type complaints have to be filed within a certain amount of time or I think that the police won't even write it down, I guess what we're wondering is: is the purpose to the Committee to stall, so that there is no where else to turn, or are they actually interested in helping people?

Has anyone out there actually contacted the Committee and what did they say? We're just trying to get an idea of who the committee is and what their rules are and are they sincere.

And no, this is not a joke. I know that it sounds ridiculous and it is ridiculous, and humiliating and embarrassing too, but we really want to know if we are walking into another trap before we talk to them. "Fool me once, shame on you; Fool me twice, shame on me." It's a weird situation to be in.

And I may be repeating myself from my previous post because I can't see it yet, but does anyone know the names of the people who are on the committee? And is it possible to just call them on the telephone at their homes instead of writing a big thing in an email to whoever reads the ethicscommittee@whatever.com?

The ZSS 'ethical guidelines for conduct' are easy to find on the web and are common sense anyway, but are there also published rules that govern the Ethics Committee itself posted anywhere on the web? Or should we really be contacting a different Zen organization first, instead of participating in what seems like an experiment for the ZSS; it's just so hard to know who to trust.

Thank you, if anyone has any advise besides "call a lawyer", we would really be interested in hearing it.

Which reminds me of one more question from the un-reviewed posting. If it is necessary to bring a lawyer to the meeting with the Ethics Committee, will the Zen Studies Society pay for the lawyer? And will the ZSS pay for a plane ticket for them to come to a meeting in New York?

And will the ZSS reimburse them for the time they might have to take off from work to come to a meeting? Are they allowed to bring family members with them to the meeting and will the ZSS buy them plane tickets too? And if they need to stay in a hotel in New York will the ZSS pay for that, or will they be expected to sleep in the Shobo-ji zendo (which I don't think they will want to do).

And will they have to talk to Eido Roshi or Mrs. Shimano? Are the Shimanos on the Ethics Committee? Will the Shimanos be on the premises? I don't think that my friends want to see them ever again but they do want to speak up and be heard.

In fact, I am certain that my friends don't ever want to see the Shimanos again, they just said that into my ear on the phone.

It's so confusing. It's such a creepy problem to have and it's such a huge waste of time and money and distress. Will someone please respond? Thanks.

August 29, 2010 7:17 AM

Anonymous said...

This is an open letter to Eido Tai Shimano Roshi:

Dear Tai San,

There are many reports of your abuse of women published on the web which indicate that you have been involved in breaking the precepts over a period of more than 40 years. I would like to urge you to come forth and make a statement in response to these accusations.

August 29, 2010 7:18 AM

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna said...

It is with deep sorrow that I write this follow up letter regarding all the events, and recent revelations about Zen Studies Society. It was certainly shocking to read everything that has been posted online subsequent to my earlier posts, and to finally sit down and read the entire archives. Although I knew there were sexual relationships going on, my general impression was that they were consensual, and occasional. I also thought that this had ended years ago. I had no idea of all these details or the extent of what went on. The cover up was indeed incredible, right from the beginning.

I apologize if my words or actions or lack of actions in any way caused or perpetuated pain for anyone. My heartfelt wishes are extended to all involved in this painful web.

All these years of practice with Eido Roshi, I saw a very different man. I saw a man deeply dedicated to dharma, helping many, tireless, relentless in his pursuit of truth. But I only saw part of the picture. I was blind to much else that was going on. There are two people we are confronted with in Eido Roshi. We must face and deal with both of them.

Most of us are familiar with the wonderful teaching, "Let he who is without sin throw the first stone." We are called upon to forgive and let go of anger and revenge. And yet this does not mean that we simply allow the same situation to go on. Forgiveness is a vital act and includes rectification and repair.

Allowing things to go on "as usual" with some slight alteration in schedule and promises of future changes denies and minimizes what went on and the pain and suffering caused by it. It only exacerbates the problem and makes the Zen Studies Society seem unable to face and deal with reality - skillfully and justly.

Unless there are real and dramatic changes, the pollution cannot be cleared up. This is an opportunity to actually put the teachings into practice - to actualize truth, purification, simplicity, humility, compassion for all involved and uncompromising honesty.

There must be full respect for each member of the sangha and their needs and experience. Without a real respect for kindness and truth, it's not real practice. And, an individual who does not respect these values, and cannot be counted on to live by them, in my opinion can not be given any power at all over the lives of others.

In order to regain some sense of honor and viability, it seems clear that the best course of action would be for Eido Roshi to take time away for a period of serious reflection without all the pressures, power and responsibilities he has had to undertake. This would give him a chance to face his situation and life fully, and make the changes he needs to make. It would help restore faith for everyone in the truth and efficacy of Zen practice. Otherwise it all begins to look like a sordid game we've all been caught in.

As a protection against self serving practice, it is also vital to routinely include emphasis on the precepts and ways of practicing the precepts in daily life.

I think it is also clear that a hierarchical, authoritarian structure of governance only exacerbates the possibilities for deception and harm. It perpetuates a sense of powerlessness and a distorted estimation of a teacher, as a greater than life figure, who has access to wisdom that the student does not. Clearly, this structure has also caused a deep feeling of powerlessness among the many women subjected to these unwanted advances, along with feelings of shame and guilt.

If our dedication to practice is real, it has to be accompanied by real changes, by a willingness to let go of old, harmful ways and take a new road forward. Everyday we say, "let true dharma continue." It is time to actualize this teaching. Nothing less will do.

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna
August, 2010

August 29, 2010 8:32 AM

Anonymous said...

You wrote all those words Brenda, all words that bolster your fantasy, and all you are calling for is, "In order to regain some sense of honor and viability, it seems clear that the best course of action would be for Eido Roshi to take time away for a period of serious reflection without all the pressures, power and responsibilities he has had to undertake."

Wake up Doctor, Mr. Shimano has had 46 years since being told clearly what is acceptable behavior. He doesn't care... time, and time, and time, and time, and time again.

The best course of action, the only single course of action that meets the fiduciary responsibility of the Board, is to remove him IMMEDIATELY and PERMATENTLY from his position. Not in two years – NOW. He can spend a period of time in serious reflection as a “civilian” where he can’t hurt anyone.

August 30, 2010 12:42 AM

Anonymous said...

Well, it's a step I suppose, but she is still codependent with Shimano. Hopefully in time more clarity and decisiveness will arise.

August 30, 2010 2:54 AM

Anonymous said...

not sure why this ZSS announcement has not made it on the blog yet:

To our treasured Sangha,

This message is to give you an update of current events.

As you know, on July 4th, we accepted the resignations of Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife Aiho-san from the Board of the Zen Studies Society.

Eido Roshi will actively continue in his role as Abbot until his retirement, but he will not be seeing new students for dokusan. He has set his retirement date for April 8, 2012, after which he will become Abbot Emeritus. Eido Roshi has said he will be available for dokusan to ordained and long-time students for as long as his health allows. New and old students will be able to do dokusan with Shinge Roshi Roko Sherry Chayat, who will be installed as Vice Abbot Dec. 31, 2010. Aiho-san Shimano, present director of New York Zendo Shobo-ji, will retire Dec. 31, 2010, and will become Director Emeritus. A new director of Shobo-Ji will be appointed later this year.

The Board of the Zen Studies Society is working with the FaithTrust Institute, a multifaith organization that addresses ethical violations by spiritual leaders. As we have noted on our updated ethics page (www.daibosatsu.org/ethical.html), if you wish to make a written comment to the ethics committee, the FaithTrust Institute will help us to respond and process everything in a timely fashion. The Ethics Committee can be reached at zssethicscom@gmail.com.

In addition, the Board will be reviewing our organizational and financial structures. The Board asks for your support as we undertake these necessary steps to insure the integrity of our Sangha and its future as a source of health and wellbeing for all members. The ZSS Board can be reached at zssboard@gmail.com.

We will continue to update you on developments. We are committed to being as open as possible through these difficult times.

August 30, 2010 5:22 AM

Anonymous said...

To Anonymous post dated August 29th, 7:17AM. All good questions to put directly to zsethicscom@gmail.com they will answer you almost immediately. Then you can judge for yourself, if it feels safe enough to trust them. Alternatively, you can contact the FaithTrust Institute directly by emailing Rev. Marie Fortune (mfortune@faithtrustinstitute.org) who is working with the Zen Studies Society and she will research whatever questions you have and get back to you.

August 30, 2010 10:36 AM

Anonymous said...

From Spike--on August 29th, 7:19 AM, Anonymous wrote: "Has anyone out there actually contacted the Committee and what did they say? We're just trying to get an idea of who the committee is and what their rules are and are they sincere."

Yes. Here is the summary between me and Joe (Genjo) Marinello:

August 5th, 8:31 PM. Gmailed asking for the following:

1. Who are the outside professionals engaged in the investigation?
2. Who are the members of the Ethics Committee?
3. Would the ZSS Board consider recruiting 'outsider' Board members?

Reply received 12:41 AM, August 6th, with full answers.

On August 18th I gmailed a suggestion that the abbot, vice abbot, and possibly other staff positions be 'direct reports' to the board. Reply received 12 minutes later.

August 20th, 6:57 PM, gmailed asking how to try to get Eido Roshi to apologize. August 20th, 7:55 PM, received ER's email address in reply.

August 21st, 11:17 AM, gmailed re:

1. NYT article (suggested appt. of PR person).
2. Continued Dokusan by ER--legal and ethical considerations.
3. Complete removal of fiduciary responsibility vested in ER and wife for ZSS.

Reply received August 21st, 3:40 PM with full answers.

I'm not going to paraphrase the replies without permission. You can ask yourself.

In the same email, anonymous wrote: "does anyone know the names of the people who are on the committee? And is it possible to just call them on the telephone at their homes instead of writing a big thing in an email to whoever reads the ethicscommittee@whatever.com?"

Call them at home? They should be at your literal beck and call at home? Look, buster, if you want to call a couple of them at the published temple phone numbers readily available on the net, feel free. I guess email just doesn't get *personal* enough for you.

August 30, 2010 12:53 PM

Anonymous said...

On Aug 29th, 7:19 AM, Anonymous wrote:

--"Which reminds me of one more question from the un-reviewed posting. If it is necessary to bring a lawyer to the meeting with the Ethics Committee, will the Zen Studies Society pay for the lawyer? And will the ZSS pay for a plane ticket for them to come to a meeting in New York?

And will the ZSS reimburse them for the time they might have to take off from work to come to a meeting? Are they allowed to bring family members with them to the meeting and will the ZSS buy them plane tickets too? And if they need to stay in a hotel in New York will the ZSS pay for that, or will they be expected to sleep in the Shobo-ji zendo (which I don't think they will want to do).

And will they have to talk to Eido Roshi or Mrs. Shimano? Are the Shimanos on the Ethics Committee? Will the Shimanos be on the premises? I don't think that my friends want to see them ever again but they do want to speak up and be heard."--

(This reply is not associated with the RA Blog)

I'm sure ZSS still uses the Alqonguin Hotel to put up its honored guests, and Virgin Blue Airlines for travel. Just publish right here your itinerary, name, address, PHONE NUMBER, and SSN, (along with your credit card info, for a small refundable *good-faith* deposit), and my friend from Somalia will facilitate your plans.

August 30, 2010 1:55 PM

Anonymous said...

Copy of post at Zen Forum International...

I was very moved by Eshin Brenda Shoshana's comments, posted here on August 30th. I have copied them and sent them to the entire Zen Studies Society (ZSS) Board and the FaithTrust Institute (FTI), which is working with us to assist us in processing and discerning how to proceed. I know the ZSS Board wants to hear from as many current or former students of Eido Roshi who have equally taken the time to make a considered analysis, no matter how critical. The ZSS Board will be meeting soon with Eido Roshi and FTI and we are compiling a dossier of the most well thought out and considered responses; so this would be a particularly good time to share what you have to say with us. The ZSS Board can be reached by emailing zssboard@gmail.com.

In our preamble to our Ethics Guidelines (<http://www.daibosatsu.org/ethical.html>) we state: "If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, or are aware of ethical matters that need to be addressed, please email your written communication to the ethics committee. With guidance from the FaithTrust Institute, the Ethics Committee will respond and process every communication we receive in a timely and appropriate manner. The Zen Studies Society Ethics Committee can be reached by emailing zssethicscom@gmail.com."

The Ethics Committee has the following three members:

Yuho Carl Baldini, School Counselor, ZSS Board member,
Keiun Clare Dacey, Social Worker
and myself Genjo Marinello, psychotherapist and ZSS Board member

In addition, during our association with FaithTrust Institute all ethics correspondence is shared with Rev. Marie Fortune and Rabbi Dratch for their analysis and input.

If a new ethics violation is found it is brought to the full Board for appropriate action. If an old ethics violation is affirmed and requires some kind of remedy beyond the scope of the committee, this is also brought to the full board. Any request for anonymity will of course be respected. If a wounded party wants to deal directly with FTI they may write Rev. Marie Fortune at mfortune@faithtrustinstitute.org; FTI will then summarize the content of the correspondence for consideration by the ZSS Ethics Committee. We do request that all correspondence be submitted in writing in such a way that ZSS or FTI can verify that we are dealing with a real person.

More often than not the "remedy" is just to be acknowledged and heard with assurance that appropriate action has been instigated; in other instances, the wounded party may suggest something more, or our consultants may suggest something more. If an apology or some sort of reconciliation is sought we will try to facilitate this.

There is no statute of limitations on feeling wounded. If you have been wounded by an ethical breach as outlined in our Ethics Guidelines (<http://www.daibosatsu.org/ethical.html>) please write us. Of course the Ethics Committee and the full Board is particularly interested in hearing any first hand accounts that have not already been "published" in some way, especially anything in the last fifteen years since the last known lapse by Eido Roshi.

If you are someone or know of someone who has been wounded by an ethical breach by anyone at ZSS we encourage you or them to write us. Not only do we need to know, we want to know. A summary of what we find and any remedies taken will be made public, when we think we have received what we can from the current and former ZSS Sangha.

With a sad heart and bow,

Genjo Marinello

August 30, 2010 5:01 PM

Anonymous said...

What is really disturbing is that the American Zen Teachers Association is in violation of their own membership admission charter by recognizing Sherry Chayat and Joe Marinello and other Shimano dharma heirs as Buddhist Teachers (herefore refered to as "Shimano Spawn"):

"Has the prospective member received substantial training and been authorized to teach by an authorized teacher in a recognized Zen lineage?"

Shimano and the Zen Studies Society own Board ruled they are NOT part of any established Zen Buddhist Organization ergo NOT part of any established lineage in any Zen Buddhist Organization:

"Dai Bosatsu Zendo and Shobo-ji Zendo are and will remain independent from any other Zen Buddhist Organization here or abroad."

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDF's/19821019_ZSS_Board.pdf

There is no "lineage" that can be claimed by the Shimano's Zen cult. This means that the alleged status of Shimano's spawn – "dharma heirs" is totally without merit in the real Buddhist lineage tradition. Sherry Chayat is no more a Roshi in the line of Hakuin and Torei than you or I or anybody. Joe of Chobo-Ji is a bogus Osho of the Shimano Zen Cult because there is no lineage.

To be in a "lineage" there has to an association by Dai Bosatsu and Shobo-ji with a recognized Zen Buddhist Organization.

A hungry lawyer (and there are plenty of those these days) could and possible should bring actionable cause of fraud against "Shimano's spawn" and the Zen Studies Society for impersonating clergy.

August 30, 2010 8:07 PM

Anonymous said...

Reposted from Barry Briggs' Oxherding Blog here;

http://www.oxherding.com/my_weblog/2010/08/the-myth-of-compartmentalization-1.html#comments

Genjo Marinello wrote:

"In our preamble to our Ethics Guidelines (www.daibosatsu.org/ethical.html) we state: "If you are reading this and feel your concerns have not been acknowledged or heard, or are aware of ethical matters that need to be addressed, please email your written communication to the ethics committee. With guidance from the FaithTrust Institute, the Ethics Committee will respond and process every communication we receive in a timely and appropriate manner. The Zen Studies Society Ethics Committee can be reached by emailing zssethicscom@gmail.com."

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In addition, during our association with FaithTrust Institute all ethics correspondence is shared with Rev. Marie Fortune and Rabbi Dratch for their analysis and input.

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More often than not the "remedy" is just to be acknowledged and heard with assurance that appropriate action has been instigated; in other instances, the wounded party may suggest something more, or our consultants may suggest something more. If an apology or some sort of reconciliation is sought we will try to facilitate this.

There is no statute of limitations on feeling wounded. If you have been wounded by an ethical breach as outlined in our Ethics Guidelines (www.daibosatsu.org/ethical.html) please write us. Of course the Ethics Committee and the full Board is particularly interested in hearing any first hand accounts that have not already been "published" in some way, especially anything in the last fifteen years since the last known lapse by Eido Roshi.

If you are someone or know of someone who has been wounded by an ethical breach by anyone at ZSS we encourage you or them to write us. Not only do we need to know, we want to know. A summary of what we find and any remedies taken will be made public, when we think we have received what we can from the current and former ZSS Sangha.

In addition if you are a current or former student of Eido Roshi, I know the board wants to here from you any considered comments or analysis you would like to make, no matter how critical. The ZSS Board will be meeting soon with Eido Roshi and FTI and we are compiling a dossier of the most well thought out and considered responses; so this would be a particularly good time to share what you have to say with us. The ZSS Board can be reached by emailing zssboard@gmail.com.

With a sad heart and bow,

Genjo Marinello"

August 30, 2010 9:42 PM

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna said...

In response to the post that said I am still calling for things to remain the same at Zen Studies Society, I ask you, (whoever the "anonymous" writer is,) to open your eyes. My entire wish is only for radical change at Zen Studies Society, in the direction of honesty, clarity, simplicity and equality. I am not a part of the board, the officers, anything, and I never, ever have been (over many, many years). I did not go to Zen Studies Society for political reasons. My actual interactions with Eido Roshi have been quite minimal over the past few years. I have clearly expressed the pain and distress I feel for those who were harmed. Beyond that, it seems to me, that if any concern at all is expressed for the well being of Eido Roshi as well as the others, that person is immediately villified. What has this attitude to do with real practice? Eido has made grievous errors, yes, he is in the grip of real illness and compulsion - and this must be addressed. I'm not saying he should remain as a teacher. He has to face what he's done. I am not covering anything up, but, also it really saddens me to see almost no compassion for him at all. This is not in keeping with the teachings...or with the simple facts of life.

August 31, 2010 9:15 AM

Anonymous said...

Re: " saddens me to see almost no compassion"

Dhammapada verse 83: "Buddha said, It is in the nature of the foolish to be full of sorrow and feel depressed when things go wrong, and to be full of gladness and feel elated when things go well. The wise, however, can withstand the ups and downs of life."

August 31, 2010 2:10 PM

Anonymous said...

I found out that ZSS Ethics Committee composed of three persons: Yuho Carl Baldini, Genjo Osho, and Keiun Clare Dacey. And the first two persons are also members of the board (picked by Eido). Isn't it something fishy (conflict of interest) here?

I do not understand the state of ethics of these students, still clouded after so many years practice Zen.

August 31, 2010 2:34 PM

Anonymous said...

Re: " saddens me to see almost no compassion"

Dhammapada verse 83: "Buddha said, It is in the nature of the foolish to be full of sorrow and feel depressed when things go wrong, and to be full of gladness and feel elated when things go well. The wise, however, can withstand the ups and downs of life."

This is a matter of time and place of the teachings.

You are promoting Fox Zen!

Is this how did you answer the Koan of Hyakujo's Fox?

"To understand clearly one has to have just one eye.

Controlled or not controlled?

The same dice shows two faces.

Not controlled or controlled,

Both are a grievous error."

So, is Mr. Shimano correct in saying there are no Ethics in Zen?

For 40+ years he has done as he pleases and lies when it serves him.

Are you saying Zen students who are "wise" and who can deal with the ups and downs of life are free from feelings?

Good luck with that!

August 31, 2010 6:04 PM

Anonymous said...

There has always been a disconnect in my mind among the various schools of Buddhism. It has always seemed that the Theravada Buddhism was closer to many of the original teachings of the Buddha than the Mahayana. In Theravada Buddhism there is the Vinaya, the rules that govern the conduct of monks and nuns.

Sexual misconduct is one of the biggest violations in the Vinaya. Dealing with it is the first of some 227 rules by one account. An interesting translation states that a monk who engages in any form of sexual intercourse is "Defeated." "Defeated" means that the offender is no longer a monk even if he continues wearing a monk's robe. The sangha will have nothing to do with him and will expel him.

That's clear enough, but that's the Theravada school.

Evidently, in several strains of Buddhism in Tibetan and Japan marriage by the clergy is permitted. We know that marriage is permitted by clergy in the Zen School (I have not read or heard anything about marriage by Korean or Chinese Buddhist clergy.) Probably

we in the West should not refer to Zen clergy who marry as monks since the term is very ingrained in our culture, but as Zen clergy or may be Zen priests or perhaps we should use the less familiar terms "osho" for male Zen clergy and "ni-ohso" for female Zen Clergy.

Has anyone read or learned about an oral tradition that sets the analogous procedures for sexual misconduct by the clergy in schools within Mahayana Buddhism in general and in Zen Buddhism specifically in Soto and Rinzai Zen Buddhism?

Thanks in advance.

August 31, 2010 9:58 PM

Anonymous said...

This is what I know regarding marriage and priesthood.

- 1) Tibetan monks do not marry. Lama is a priest, has two categories monks (celibate) and yogis (not necessarily celibate). Their garbs are almost the same.
- 2) Theravadin monks cannot marry, they follow strict vinaya rules.
- 3) Chinese/Korean monks depend on lineage (organization), some cannot marry, others may have families. As a rule of thumb, if they live in a monastery usually they are not married, while if they live in a community temple they are allowed to have a family depending on organization.
- 4) While I was taking a ride to DBZ, I compared with Japanese friends about marriage tradition. According to them in Japan the rule is more relax, monks are free to marry (since Meiji Era), but a roshi in Japan (once again, in Japan) is supposed to not married.

September 1, 2010 6:03 AM

Anonymous said...

re: "Are you saying Zen students who are "wise" and who can deal with the ups and downs of life are free from feelings?"

Good luck with that!"

Please do the Buddha the courtesy of rereading his words carefully without your fox mind running so wild. I am just the messenger of the Buddha's words . You however (Anonymous said -August 31, 2010 6:04 PM) have a message which is outside of the Buddha's teaching. You have become both Hyakujo and the Fox. Your point of view is interesting,

The Buddha did not say the wise are free from feelings what he did say is that "the wise withstand the ups and downs of life". Examine closely the word "withstand".

Definition of WITHSTAND

1a : to stand up against : oppose with firm determination; especially : to resist successfully

b : to be proof against : resist the effect of

2archaic : to stop or obstruct the course of

If you disagree please take up your argument with the Buddha

September 1, 2010 7:13 AM

Anonymous said...

The apple never falls far from the tree.

September 1, 2010 10:35 AM

Anonymous said...

no apple falling.... no tree releasing.... just your mind in motion

September 1, 2010 6:34 PM

Anonymous said...

Dear Messenger of Buddha -

So, what is your point? My argument is not with the Buddha but with his self appointed messenger.

When Eshin wrote: "it saddens me to see almost no compassion (for Shimano)," YOU decided it was time become Buddha's messenger and use the Buddha's words to clearly slam her by demeaning her feelings by quoting "Dhammapada verse 83 at her."

You could have kept silent and realized that this meant something for her. But you probably don't know that she has been struggling with her feelings and her student relationship with Shimano for decades, probably longer than you've been practicing, may be for more years that you've been alive.

Signed: Sloppy Joe, The Foolish Fox Slayer

September 1, 2010 9:36 PM

Anonymous said...

From <http://genkaku-again.blogspot.com>

September 1, 2010 8:49 PM Anonymous said...

August 31, 2010 Anonymous said...

“He saw a woman crying outside the Zendo. She was evidently one of the last people to leave and Shimano saw her at the back of Sho Bo Ji. There was a brief conversation then Shimano suddenly reached out and fondled one of her breasts. He stopped when she did not react the way he hoped.”

...

What year was that? I think that I may know this woman and if it is her then he had already sexually abused her, she was trapped in the secret, and he was trying to keep her quiet.

Mr. Shimano is such an experienced predator that he knows when one of his victims is going to speak out, before they even know it themselves. And while he stalls them, he begins to tell his other students, usually in private and without witnesses, that he’s “worried” about the mentally unbalanced crying/angry student who is crazy (and therefore, not credible).

Just like he did to Soen Roshi.

Over the years at the ZSS, there have been many men and women who were crying or angry, but we were supposed to view them as being weak or insane or privately disturbed, and to ignore them and to “mind your own business”; a lack of compassion was part of the training.

Over the subsequent years, I have trained with other organizations and we are quite free to ask people who are crying or angry, “Are you okay? Anything that I can do?” Like normal people do, you know? Normal.

Here’s another anecdote that you may wish to consider:

The wife of a former Director (a very decent fellow who realized rather quickly that the ZSS was not for him and he left), was up at Dai Bosatsu on a yoga weekend.

She shared a room with a young woman who was being sexually abused by the Vice Abbot, and the Director’s wife was getting locked out of the room while these sessions of abuse were going on. And when the Vice Abbot was not in the room, the woman was distraught and crying.

The wife finally moved up into the library and slept on the floor, which is a dangerous place to be because it is adjacent to Mr. Shimano’s room, but she was fine.

...

The back door to Mr. Shimano's bedroom is from the library at Dai Bosatsu, and is one of his sexual hunting grounds besides the dokusan room.

So there was another young female resident, about 21 years old, who we thought of as a bit vulnerable, but very nice. One day she was up in the library and Mr. Shimano poked his head out of his room, and said, I have something to show you, come into my room.

So she went in. He asked her if she knew the difference between an uncircumcised penis and a circumcised penis. Then he lifted his robe and displayed his private parts.

I asked her, so what did you do? She said that she told him that she had to go to the kitchen or something, and then she avoided him after that. Avoided him? Yes, she was trapped at the monastery and had nowhere else to go; she was our kessei student.

...

And Mr. Joe Genjo Marinello has been hanging around with Mr. Shimano for 15 years, and he really expects us to believe that he has seen none of this? Not the penis? Nor the crying? Nor the anger? Nothing? And Ms. Sherry Roko Chyatt: no penis, no crying, no anger, no nothing?

...

I have a request, dear readers: If you were at the recent dinner where our great-grand daughter student stood up, a student who is 50 YEARS younger than Mr. Shimano, and announced that she had engaged in sexual intercourse with him, would you please jot down your memories: who was there, what was said, how she looked, how long had she been stressed out, was she crying, had you seen her crying, had anybody offered to help her? And what's up with Fujin, where was she?

And then send it to Adam at genkakukigen@aol.com. Sorry to volunteer you Adam, but you were a newspaper guy and you know how to protect your sources. Maybe there is a better mechanism, but in the meantime everybody, please start jotting your notes.

We must not abandon our great-grand daughter student nor should she be standing alone.

September 2, 2010 2:07 PM

Joy said...

Ok – I'll begin again, after many years...

1 – Please remove Shimano as Abbot and not just from the board while remaining Abbot and seeing old students until the year 2012. How can this be accomplished?

2 – Then and only then does it make sense for many of us affected to engage in thoughtful and constructive conversation about restorative justice, reconciliation, forgiveness and other such terms that have been used on the Aitken-Shimano blog. They are fine and meaningful terms even within the context of Buddhism, but to ask or expect this while Shimano remains Abbot is deeply troubling and makes it very very difficult to

trust the existing leadership. This is not to mention the online report from a member of the ethics committee announcing that Shimano said that the newest young woman initiated a desire for a sexual relationship and he could not resist. That is ethical? The existing and documented history, both past and present is enough. Each time a category 4 Shimano-hurricane hits again, it is also on the backs of those of the many many many of us who were deeply harmed in the past and not heard. It is insulting to the efforts made by many people, including myself. It is also very painful and potentially re-traumatizing for some to recreate their story when it has already been documented or told to others. The silent eye of this hurricane is Shimano himself. That is why this entire blog started – with Aitken’s wisdom to call out Shimano from his center of the hurricane around which all this present distress circulates.

3 – Can it be accomplished with a positive future outcome for Dharma heirs and long time students who have stayed with Shimano? Do you know that some of us are truly concerned for you?

For example, the potential for great opportunity to look honestly and clearly at the reasons for 40 years of toxic consequences in a quest to become models of truly integrated Zen work are rich and waiting. It would clearly require humble requests for help and the addition of insightful and seasoned Zen/Buddhist teachers and thinkers to offer direction on issues of clergy abuse and its ongoing healing. Other organizations have successfully cleared the way for new wine in new skins or emptying the glass full of defenses and just repeating the same old same old.

4 – Then there’s the land. It’s beautiful at DBZ. The lake, the moss along the paths, trees actually growing out of the cracks in boulders, the Jizo looking down across the lake. That’s why I personally tried to stay. I was hooked on the sound of the rain on the roof during a gathered sitting, the bell in the distance, and opportunity to cook for my Sangha. And, then, “the color of everything.

In it’s way the land also speaks. How about freeing this as well and seeing the creative potentials as being done by “The Order of Mountains and Rivers” at former John Daido Looi’s monastery. Off the cushion and finding the immense life in such relationship could be part of the transition and healing – how to treat life and relationship with each other. Our world would be grateful that some genuinely try. If all my suffering was to realize this, then I would say I am on the more fortunate side of things here.

Joy

September 2, 2010 2:29 PM

Anonymous said...

For those who have wandered onto this section of Aitken Roshi's blog, be aware that is more than just bickering, allegation and accusation going on.

It goes well beyond the simple sounding question in the open letter to Eido Tai Shimano that Aitken Roshi wrote at the beginning of this post.

From the introduction found at the ShimanoArchive.com:
shimanoarchive.com

In June 2003, Robert Baker Aitken, Rōshi, the founder of the Diamond Sangha, an international Zen sangha, donated his extensive files to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library Archives. These files are slowly being processed and cataloged by the staff of the University of Hawaii at Mānoa Library.

On July 29, 2008 Aitken, Rōshi issued an order unsealing a section of his archives. In a message to Lynn Ann Davis, Head of the Preservation Department of the library, Aitken, Rōshi states:

“You will recall that my archives at Hamilton Library includes a folder marked ‘Eido Shimano—Do not open.’ I am moved by circumstances to request that that this seal be removed, and that the contents be made as available as other material in my archives.”

The first group of files became available on August 19, 2008 and they were distributed to a number of scholars, investigators, Zen clerics and students worldwide. Letters of authenticity signed by Lynn Ann Davis, confirm the authenticity of the documents, and every page of each document is stamped with the library's stamp.

The complete document set extends through the period of 1964 to 2003 and is concerned primarily with the “Shimano problem,” a series of issues surrounding the behavior of Eido Shimano, Rōshi that first became apparent in 1964 in Hawai'i, where Aitken, Rōshi was based.

The downloadable pdf files were made directly from hardcopy documents supplied by The University of Hawai'i at Manōa - Archive. Some redactions of survivors' names and identifying information have been implemented on this site as a courtesy to protect the privacy of the women involved. Further documents may be posted as they become available.

<http://www.shimanoarchive.com>
September 3, 2010 7:37 AM

Jiro Andy Afable said...

The spiritual standing of Eido Shimano Roshi, the Abbot and spiritual leader of The Zen Studies Society is so impaired that he should withdraw from the abbacy of The Zen Studies Society.

Unless the abbot resigns as abbot and spiritual representative of The Zen Studies Society, The Zen Studies Society will be unable to function in a way that meets the needs of a

Buddhist Sangha and fulfill the aspirations of its founders. The Zen Studies Society will wither away, shunned by dharma students who routinely use the web to inform themselves.

Eshin Brenda Shoshanna in this blog had an eloquent and very kindly suggestion to Eido Roshi:

In order to regain some sense of honor and viability, it seems clear that the best course of action would be for Eido Roshi to take time away for a period of serious reflection without all the pressures, power and responsibilities he has had to undertake. This would give him a chance to face his situation and life fully, and make the changes he needs to make. It would help restore faith for everyone in the truth and efficacy of Zen practice. Otherwise it all begins to look like a sordid game we've all been caught in.

As long as Eido Roshi remains as Abbot of The Zen Studies Society, we have to articulate the many compelling reasons why he should step down. We should do this clearly, without viciousness or self-righteousness.

I have sent the Directors of The Zen Studies Society a petition requesting them to take board action that will make the abbot step down. I am now working on a website so all interested parties can read this public petition online and hopefully become signatories. The petition website will become accessible in about a week or so. I will provide this blog with a URL when it opens.

September 3, 2010 12:18 PM

Jen said...

To Eshin Brenda Shoshanna:

I do not know if these words will help you, but they are well meant. I have compassion for Eido Shimano; he is clearly unwell, ruled by sexual compulsions, and has never been fully made to face this problem by those who are/have been in a position to HELP. I can only hope that the current proceedings will set the tone for dealing with this issue in Zen communities in the future.

While we're at it, let us all also have compassion for Shimano's wife, who has had to deal with all this for years, publicly and privately;

for our departed Aitken Roshi, who had to keep a growing file on his colleague on these matters for 30-some years;

for the women who Shimano harmed, and those women who feel they were not harmed;

for the board members who hesitate(d) to act out of misguided loyalty, or fear, or their own reasons (we shouldn't presume to know);

for every one of you who have spoken out on this issue here on the Internet, and forced that board to pay attention;

for anyone affiliated past/present with ZSS who struggles with the knowledge of what Shimano has done;

and for those who hesitate to join any sangha at all for fear of men like him and those who cover up such actions.

Gassho,

Jen

September 3, 2010 1:02 PM

Anonymous said...

It should be noted that Jiro Andy Afable was Eido Shimano's second Dharma heir and former Vice Abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo. He broke with Shimano in what appears in the archives as under acrimonious circumstances.

September 3, 2010 1:03 PM

Anonymous said...

Exactly an apple and exactly a tree. Go a little further down that trail.

September 3, 2010 7:12 PM

Anonymous said...

Anonymous said...

Exactly an apple and exactly a tree. Go a little further down that trail.

September 3, 2010 7:12 PM

Dear Anon eptember 3, 2010 7:12 PM,

If you have something specific about Jiro's behavior you would like to point out, please try to be a little less cryptic.

It has been pointed out else where on the internet that every one who trained with Shimano may need to train elsewhere given Shimano's gross deficiencies of character, and since he effectively cut himself off from mainstream Japanese Rinzai Zen in October, 1982:

"...it was RESOLVED that the Zen Studies Society acknowledges and declares Eido Tai Shimano Roshi to be the founder, ... and that Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji and New York

Zendo Shobo-ji are and will remain independent from any other Zen Buddhist organization here or abroad."

from 19821019_ZSS_Board.pdf
September 3, 2010 9:48 PM

Anonymous said...

September 2, 2010 2:07 PM

Joy said...

"Each time a category 4 Shimano-hurricane hits again, it is also on the backs of those of the many many many of us who were deeply harmed in the past and not heard.

It is insulting to the efforts made by many people, including myself. It is also very painful and potentially re-traumatizing for some to recreate their story when it has already been documented or told to others.

The silent eye of this hurricane is Shimano himself."

...

And Robert Aitken Roshi was a shelter in that storm, a welcome safe haven to us all.

He never ran and hid, he always wrote back, he returned our phone calls, he took what action he could, and he encouraged us to be forthright and to manifest mettle, simply telling the truth.

He had a very special ministry, unsought but acknowledged, and it touched down upon him after Mr. Shimano landed on his doorstep in 1961. There are other people in the United States who find themselves with similarly unsought ministries, and they are by no means all clergy; they intervened on behalf of someone who was being secretly abused and thereafter became known as a person to trust.

Their names and phone numbers are passed between people on the underground railroad of the sexually abused.

Rev. Marie Fortune, of the Faith Trust Institute, appears to be another such person with an unsought area of ministry that has indeed evolved. The Faith Trust Institute ministers to people and churches in an effort to end sexual and domestic violence. Inter-related violences: sexual abuse by the clergy, domestic violence, marital rape, incest, child abuse.

Buddhist people look at the shimanoarchive.com and say, gee there's hardly any victims, what's all the fuss? What they don't realize is that most of the "redacted" documents in the archives are essentially attachments to the minutes from ZSS board meetings. The minutes themselves admit little.

Mr. Aitken ministered to some of these “redacted” people, yes, but there are also the many silent ones who never spoke up, who told only him, some were terrified and so very alone. Trapped and terrified that they would lose everything if anyone found out: their wives, their husbands, their children, their very right to be human. Such is the power of sex offenders to demote their victims to sub-human status, in the eyes of the common man.

It would be so very pleasing to me if Mr. Aitken were alive, so that he might accompany Marie Fortune to the Zen Studies Society today, and sit face to face with the man who has been running away from his sexual assaults for half a century. He runs with his feet and his lies.

I would assume that if Mr. Shimano doesn't show up for the meeting or he tries to have his stooges doing his lying for him, that Rev. Fortune and the Rabbi will use their own feet to walk out door.

Although Rev. Fortune is certainly nobody's fool, especially when it comes to predatory priests, I do hope that she doesn't get snowed by all of that American “Buddhist cult” rubbish that the Board fed to the New York Times; about how “priests and rabbis know their boundaries” but “Buddhist Teachers” are allowed to sexually abuse people. And the reporter, Mark Oppenheimer, apparently believed them; how gullible and how bizarre.

The Asian Buddhist community, the real Buddhists, are disgusted to have their religion soiled by these perverse lies from the American community.

The Zen Studies Society Board of Directors is shameless in taking advantage of that incompetent reporter, Mark Oppenheimer, and for permitting the appearance of collusion between the New York Times and the ZSS Board in fighting the negligence lawsuit that they imagine to be coming or has already arrived. The Board is without conscience in exploiting and soiling the reputation of the New York Times.

Let us hope that the Faith Trust Institute is a bit smarter than the New York Times, and that they manage to avoid having *their* reputation soiled.

September 4, 2010 8:11 AM

Anonymous said...

..."2 – Then and only then does it make sense for many of us affected to engage in thoughtful and constructive conversation about restorative justice, reconciliation, forgiveness and other such terms that have been used on the Aitken-Shimano blog. They are fine and meaningful terms even within the context of Buddhism, but to ask or expect this while Shimano remains Abbot is deeply troubling and makes it very very difficult to trust the existing leadership."

I think your input and your sisters that were harmed will be the only way the Board would consider removing him at this time. Otherwise, he may be able to weather the

storm again and continue. Please attempt to contact your sisters that were also harmed and together take a stand and either meet the committee in person or have it done by skype. This courageous action by you could determine the outcome. You are the only victim in two months who has spoke on these blogs. If as you say, there are, "many many many of us who were deeply harmed and not heard", this is your time to be heard. I know this may be very difficult for you, but if you want to see him gone, then the way to do this would be for these many many victims to come forward to let the ZSS committee know what you have had to endure. Thank you.

September 4, 2010 5:06 PM

Anonymous said...

"...it was RESOLVED that the Zen Studies Society acknowledges and declares Eido Tai Shimano Roshi to be the founder, ... "

Funny how in 2000 Mr. Shimano, during a Dharma talk, tried to claim that Soen Roshi was the founder of DBZ. I guess that lie was even too much to swallow for his loyal followers.

What ever happened to that money that was ear-marked by DBZ to help establish new satellite centers?

September 4, 2010 11:21 PM

Anonymous said...

Anonymous September 4, 2010 11:21 PM said...

"...it was RESOLVED that the Zen Studies Society acknowledges and declares Eido Tai Shimano Roshi to be the founder, ... "

"Funny how in 2000 Mr. Shimano, during a Dharma talk, tried to claim that Soen Roshi was the founder of DBZ. I guess that lie was even too much to swallow for his loyal followers.

"What ever happened to that money that was ear-marked by DBZ to help establish new satellite centers?"

Dear Anon 9/4 11:21. to answer your first question, please read the referenced document in it's entirety. I quoted the section relevant to indicate that Shimano with Board approval separated from Ryutaku-ji, Myoshin-ji, and mainstream Rinzai Zen in October of 1982. Essentially, the same board meeting notes state that Soen Roshi and Nyogen Sensaki were to be considered "honorary founders." Sadly not a single word of official mention of the slightest bit of gratitude thanking Ms. Dorris Carlson for donating the large amount of seed money making any of it possible.

Regarding your second question, would you post the reference of the earmarked money statement. What was the amount? The date? There are some references to donations to

other groups that may be considered affiliates or "satellites" in the archive but the amounts are unknown, as are, in some cases, the nature of the affiliates. However, unless some current board members take an active interest in that matter, your question may be simply internal and moot, but if there's enough information available the NYS Attorney General or the State or Federal Tax Department may have something actionable and then you should consider contacting the appropriate agencies.

September 5, 2010 9:48 AM

Anonymous said...

I would like to comment on three things from my own post of September 3, 2010 9:48 PM

1. I said, "Mr. Aitken ministered to some of these "redacted" people, yes, but there are also the many silent ones who never spoke up, who told only him, some were terrified and so very alone."

I am at not all certain that they "told only him"; confiding in someone is usually just a first step.

2. I said, "[In the New York Times article] "priests and rabbis know their boundaries" but "Buddhist Teachers" are allowed to sexually abuse people."

My statement is a bit of an over-simplification, so I went back to the original article in the New York Times, and tried to make some sense of the paragraph. Mr. Oppenheimer states:

"The root of the problem, some experts say, is that the teacher/student relationship in Buddhism has no obvious Western analogy. Priests and rabbis know the boundaries, even if some do not always respect them. Doctors, too, have ethical canons they are supposed to honor. A spiritual figure like a priest, an authority figure like a teacher, a therapeutic figure like an analyst — the Buddhist teacher may be all of those, but is not really like any one of them."

Who is the "expert" who says that the teacher/student relationship has no obvious analogy, in the West or anywhere else in the world? It's quite clear: Teacher + Student = No sex.

Mr. Oppenheimer goes on to say that

Priests = No sex.

Rabbis = No sex.

Doctors = No sex.

But then Mr. Oppenheimer concludes that a Buddhist teacher is a "spiritual figure" who is/or like a priest (no sex), and/or an "authority figure like a teacher" (no sex), and/or a "therapeutic figure like an analyst" (no sex), "but is not really like any one of them."

And therefore, there is loophole that means that Buddhist teachers can sexually abuse people? Mr. Oppenheimer is confused.

We've all heard this sort of nonsense before, when a "buddhist teacher" gets caught sexually abusing his students, "You unenlightened people just don't understand the special nature of the teacher/student relationship." Actually, we do understand it, we understand it quite well: No sex.

3. I said, "The Zen Studies Society Board of Directors is shameless in taking advantage of that incompetent reporter, Mark Oppenheimer, and for permitting the appearance of collusion between the New York Times and the ZSS Board in fighting the negligence lawsuit that they imagine to be coming or has already arrived."

Let's take a closer look at Mr. Oppenheimer's statement on 8/20:

"In interviews over the past two weeks, four board members, including Mr. Marinello, said that on June 21 a woman — whose name he would not reveal — stood up during dinner at the Catskills monastery and announced that for the past two years she had had a consensual affair with Mr. Shimano, who was at the dinner."

Quite a mouthful; a 52 word sound bite.

Would Mr. Oppenheimer do interviews, for example, with a ring of car thieves and not even bother to interview someone who had actually lost their car?

And if Mr. Oppenheimer had two weeks for the interviews, why was he only talking to the ringleaders, like Mr. Joe Genjo Marinello, who has been somewhat frantically depicting our great-grand-daughter student with the phrase "consensual affair" on the Buddhist blogs?

And in that two week period, surely Mr. Oppenheimer was made aware that our great-grand-daughter student is 50 years younger than Mr. Shimano; or is that just for a giggle and off the record. Or perhaps he is entirely unfamiliar with clergy sexual abuse and he thinks that these things are "affairs".

A two year "affair"? Was it continuous or was she just occasionally badgered?

And how was Mr. Oppenheimer contacted to write this article in the first place? Did the Zen Studies Society send him a "press release" and then invite him over?

Perhaps Mr. Oppenheimer will consider joining journalistic forces with Ms. Robin Westen, and dig a little deeper for the story.

September 7, 2010 11:13 AM

Anonymous said...

May 20, 2010

Dear Tai San,

There are many reports of your abuse of women published on the web which indicate that you have been involved in breaking the precepts over a period of more than 40 years. I would like to urge you to come forth and make a statement in response to these accusations.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Aitken

September 7, 2010

Dear Friends,

I would like to acknowledge the pain and unnecessary suffering you went through in your hearts due to my faults. I have a profound feeling of remorse for my actions.

This August marked my 50th anniversary in the United States. During this half-century I have received so much from people the world over. Over time, I took your kindness for granted and arrogance grew in my heart. As a result, my sensitivity to feel the pain of others decreased. Now, as I reflect on the past, I realize how many people's feelings and trust in me were hurt by my words and deeds. Please accept my heartfelt apology.

My mother was the person who encouraged me the most to follow Buddha's path. Tomorrow is her memorial day, as she passed away on September 8, 1986. Hearing her voice, I have decided to observe my 50th anniversary in the United States by stepping down from my position as abbot of the Zen Studies Society on the last day of Rohatsu sesshin in 2010.

Even though I carry sadness in my heart, as a Buddhist monk, my vow to practice will not end. In order to preserve the Dharma legacy, ensure the training of future teachers, and to purify my own karma, I must march on.

Gassho,

Eido Shimano

September 7, 2010 4:00 PM

Anonymous said...

Mr. Shimano is without conscience in coming over here and crapping on Mr. Aitkens blog, now that he is gone.

It's the same thing that he did with those sarcastic "Dear Dorris" letters in the Zen Studies Society Newsletter, after Mrs. Carlson passed away and she could no longer call her lawyeres.

I have a long post that I already wrote about that, but I never bothered to post it. I'm going to go find it right now.

Something like, "Are we now to expect a series of "Dear Bob" letters, accompanied by chummy old photographs under the palm trees of Hawaii?"

What a coward. What a creep.

Stepping down as abbot? Are you leaving the property and taking Ms. Sherry Roko Chyatt and Mr. Joe Genjo Marinello with you, that's what we know.

September 7, 2010 8:08 PM

Anonymous said...

[url]<http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?p=2271>[/url]

[quote] September 7, 2010

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Even though I carry sadness in my heart, as a Buddhist monk, my vow to practice will not end. In order to preserve the Dharma legacy, ensure the training of future teachers, and to purify my own karma, I must march on.

Gassho,

Eido Shimano[/quote]
September 8, 2010 11:25 AM

Anonymous said...

Apology and resignation
<http://sweepingzen.com/>
(ed: ignore if duplicate)
September 8, 2010 12:53 PM

Anonymous said...

Now now . . .

ES didn't "come over here and crap on Mr. Aitkens blog." This was posted by someone who received the ZSS e-mail and is posting it here for others.

Don't jump to conclusions that have no basis in reality. There's quite enough of that going on 'round here already.

September 9, 2010 1:36 PM

Anonymous said...

Jiro Roshi has set up a petition asking for Eido's immediate resignation. I feel it's tremendous that Jiro has taken the bull by it's horn. Eido's other dharma heirs can learn from him. As a former student of Eido the petition is great step towards healing.

A.M

September 10, 2010 12:42 PM

Anonymous said...

Once again I see that Brenda Shoshanna cannot resist defending her man Shimano. She just doesn't get it. She says "there are two Shimanos." A good one and a bad one. Oh brother.

Not only is this not a sound Zen perspective, it simply isn't insightful psychology. From a supposed psychologist and "relationship expert"!

People are complex, sure. But a sociopath is a sociopath. The "good" is never separate from the bad - "the good" is always in service to the bad, actually. The wolf only wears sheep clothing. He doesn't have a sheep half and a wolf half. Until the costume is

stripped, he cannot be trusted to be true to his nature. Shimano, as Aitken roshi said, has a criminal mind. Period.

Once again, she laments that "we aren't showing enough compassion for him." She's gone from his outright defense, and labeling the abused as straight up liars and sluts, to now saying that Shimano is actually two people and we should be voicing compassion.

Sometimes compassion is a kick in the ass and a streaming venomous tirade. I personally think he deserves at least that much for the damage he's caused, and for his weak, belated response, after 40 years and the total impossibility of continuing - which we know he would do if he had any chance. He quits now that he's 78 and backed into a corner? Yeah, let's just let him bow out gracefully, with compassion and gratitude. That's right...
September 10, 2010 10:05 PM

Joy said...

From "Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America", 1990 by Katy Butler

"The late Marine Stuart-roshi, a Zen teacher based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, distinguished between sexuality and sexual abuse when she broke off contact with Eido Shimao roshi of New York. "I wasn't judgmental about sex, or about a teacher having sex with a student, but in this situation it was an unloving act," she told author Helen Tworok, who profiled Stuart in *Zen in America*. "It was the misuse of sex—and of women and the manipulations that were so devastating."

While the distinction between sexuality and sexual abuse is a valuable one, others argue that such relationships almost always turn out badly because of enormous differences in power, experience and hope between the people involved. Peter Rutter, M.D., a San Francisco Jungian analyst, believes women are drawn into such relationships by psychological wounds: a background of incest, the desire to be deeply seen or the hope of spiritual and psychological healing.

But the promise of healing almost always goes unfulfilled, explained Rutter, author of *Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers and Other Men in Power Betray Women's Trust*. "The number of healthy relationships that emerge are minuscule," he said in a recent interview. "The damage is almost universal, and it is absolutely identical, whether the relationships take place within imported Eastern disciplines or Western psychotherapy." Rutter says the relationships bear the hallmarks, and cause the damage, of incest relationships. "There's the same difference in power, the built-in admiration for the symbolic father, and the inability to displease him or see that he is damaging her."

"These relationships are mostly temporary, and the women are usually discarded," Rutter said. "They break the student's connection to his or her own spiritual source, and that connection can be forever lost."

September 12, 2010 1:17 AM

Joy said...

Maurine Stuart Roshi was a student of Soen and Shimano. She also studied piano at Julliard with the same teacher who taught world-class pianists and conductors. Her intuition and sensitivities were way way up there. The fact that she turned away from her own teacher - Shimano - must have taken tremendous integrity and risk, and been based on substantial reason and evidence.

Jiro is doing the same in his own way. Thank you, Jiro - you are in good company.

I hope that Dharma teachers see this as a turning point for Zen in America. It's an important statement to the Zen community and to the public that will say that no more of this will be tolerated. The consequences are devastating, and Buddhism is not intended to cover and conceal this extensive kind of harmful behavior and any misguided efforts to enable it. Such people deserve to be standing for better things. It is, after all, a beautiful practice.

September 12, 2010 2:08 AM

(Rev.) Jiro Andy Afbale said...

On May 20, 2010, Robert Aitken Roshi, the most respected Senior Zen Roshi in America, issued a historic and unprecedented public letter to Shimano Roshi:

"Dear Tai San,

There are many reports of your abuse of women published on the web which indicate that you have been involved in breaking the precepts over a period of more than 40 years. I would like to urge you to come forth and make a statement in response to these accusations.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Aitken

We are grateful to Robert Aitken, Roshi for changing the nature and venue of Buddhist discussion. The revelations about my former teacher, Eido Shimano was truly an "eye-opener" that changed our perception and attitudes towards him. Here on the internet, the "Roku" (sayings and deeds) of both Aitken and Shimano are unfolding, for all Buddhists to witness, deeply consider, and take to heart.

I entreat you to give serious consideration to a petition that expresses with clarity and sincerity why Eido Shimano should step down.

Sincerely,

Jiro Andy Afable
September 12, 2010 9:23 AM

Anonymous said...

The correct link for the petition is:

<http://www.sanghaconvergence.org>
September 12, 2010 10:18 AM

Anonymous said...

Dear Jiro,

Although many of us at ZSS agree with your petition, we cannot sign it right now (wait for the right moment). We try our best to resolve it internally by pushing hard the board to rewrite ZSS bylaws and to confine Shimano and his wife's action within the sangha.

Sincerely
September 12, 2010 3:42 PM

Anonymous said...

Signing the petition will in no way prevent resolution, don't buy into what his enablers would tell you. Your signature will insure that the right thing is done for the Sangha. Those who are in power who think their identity is tied up with whatever "credentials" Shimano has bestowed have some waking up to do.... As Robert Aitken said, "They are part of the problem."
September 13, 2010 2:32 AM

genkaku said...

"We try our best to resolve it internally by pushing hard the board to rewrite ZSS bylaws and to confine Shimano and his wife's action within the sangha."

Hi Anonymous 3:42 p.m. While I admire your no-doubt difficult efforts, I do wonder how confining "Shimano and his wife's action within the sangha" will make the sangha any less open to the misfortunes it has suffered in the past. To shorten a dog's leash only means you have the same dog with a different leash. I don't mean to pooh-pooh your efforts, but wonder if there isn't a difference between compassion and foolishness.

September 13, 2010 4:34 AM

Anonymous said...

People at ZSS need to consider that the Sangha is far broader than just those presently associated with the organization. There are hundreds of people who came before them and poured their hearts and souls into that organization and were summarily dismissed, disenfranchised and driven off by Mr. Shimano, his despicable behavior and the enabling toadies who's misguided "devotion" and "gratitude" perpetuated the psychopathology over the decades. The idea of "internal" is perhaps short-sighted.

Even now, his only two remaining loyal "Dharma heirs" are conducting an active telephone campaign attempting to influence Dharma teachers NOT to sign the petition calling for Shimano's removal. Students: please talk to your teachers and urge them to take an independent stand to bring Mr. Shimano's tenure to a halt immediately instead of on his own terms and in a manner suiting his prime supporters. Enough is enough....

September 13, 2010 9:10 AM

(Rev.) Jiro Andy Afile said...

Jiro, "Although many of us at ZSS agree with your petition, we cannot sign it right now (wait for the right moment). We try our best to resolve it internally by pushing hard the board to rewrite ZSS bylaws and to confine Shimano and his wife's action within the sangha."

There is a new document in the online petition, "The Clear Way to Reconciliation", which I hope will sway the concerned Sangha of ZSS to sign the petition immediately.

Join us, please, so that The Zen Studies Society can move ahead with confidence. This is a historic moment in the history of Zen Studies, and you can make a difference for the better.

Proceed to: <http://sanghaconvergence.org/>

September 13, 2010 6:32 PM

(Rev.) Jiro Andy Afile said...

<http://sanghaconvergence.org/>

This is the URL for the petition asking for the immediate withdrawal of Eido Shimano from The Zen Studies Society.

September 13, 2010 7:07 PM

Anonymous said...

I see that my earlier post of today beginning with “Thank you, Jiro Andy Affable”, has not yet been approved. It concerns Mrs. Carlson’s disassociation from the Zen Studies Society in 1984, when she was 80 years old.

I have discussed the post with my colleagues and we think that the verb “steal” in the phrase “she caught Mr. Shimano trying to steal the property rights to the Society’s parsonage”, is more accurately described by the phrase, “she caught Mr. Shimano trying to convert the property rights of the Society’s parsonage to his personal ownership”.

Rather than “stealing”, Mr. Shimano was trying to fool the Board into signing away their ownership of the parsonage. It is what Mrs. Carlson calls “a Roshi’s deception”, in her 3/6/84 letter to Board president Sylvan Busch:

“You placed great emphasis (and total confidence) in the Roshi’s reported conversation with me on September 19, that I had agreed to the idea of selling the townhouse and therefore having done that, agreed to the whole scheme of things which ultimately provides for a significant benefit to the Roshi and his wife.

September 19, as you know is the anniversary of Chester Carlson's passing. But it should not be the anniversary of a Roshi's deception. I did not approve of the plan that he ultimately announced in the December 21 letter.

I propose the following as a realistic and fair conclusion to the whole situation.

Once the sale of 356 East 69th Street is completed and the apartment purchased and legal ownership is the Zen Studies Society, deduct all costs of the sale; remit \$160,000.00 to the Roshi and his wife and return the balance to me.

Do not create a "Carlson Fund" as I will determine how the money shall be used in keeping with the original intentions I had in 1974. And further, under the present circumstances, I do not want the Carlson name used by the Zen Studies Society in any manner.”

...

I will re-word my original post and re-submit it, but here is the reason that I believe that it is important:

It is critical that the members of the current Board of Directors understand the methods of Mr. Shimano’s pathological lying. “Normal” people cannot even begin to imagine the complete lack of respect that he has for them, nor the consequences they will personally suffer if they act upon his lies.

It is also critical that students of the organization should be aware that when speaking with Mr. Shimano they should always have witnesses, and that they should not share any

personal information with him. Again, this is very difficult for “normal” people to grasp, especially when the Board pushes Mr. Shimano forth as their trusted teacher.

...

This post from the Zen International Forum offers additional insight into the “Shimano problem”.

Post by Seigen on Tue Aug 03, 2010 10:41 pm

Here's the hard part for the bodhisattva:

...It is not advisable to try to reform or cure psychopaths.

The best advice is to learn to identify them and develop a strategy for cutting off the relationship. Although a relationship with a psychopath is painful, it is also an opportunity to enhance your spiritual growth and purify your own motives. Be patient with friends who are under the control of a psychopath, and be ready to help them when they express doubts. Awareness of the problem of psychopaths is half of the solution.”

...

A number of years ago, in discussing the “Shimano problem” with a senior American Zen teacher who has known Mr. Shimano for decades, he described Mr. Shimano as “a psychopath who has surrounded himself with co-psychopaths”.

I personally do not see anything wrong with the “co-psychopathic zen practice” and it may be appropriate for his extreme supporters. But it is dangerous for the general public.

Mr. Shimano should be moved into one of their zendos (Genjo, Roko, Junpo, Eshin, Zenshin, etc) so that the threat to the public is minimized.

I will re-submit my original post at a later date.
September 13, 2010 8:00 PM

Anonymous said...

Jiro,

One who signs the petition from Shobo-ji is our senior member who has clear integrity. There are many more, and I am sure they will definitely come out if current board cannot act decisively.

Yes, we need people from outside to push reform. We also request patience from Maha-Sangha since we also fight within. We, the inside and outside, should shake hand to change this toxic environment. Why? It is only through legal-venue

if we only depend on outsiders. If the insiders remain intact, AND no legal-venue from outside, change will never happen. Since legal venue is

now not an option (as far as I know), then both the outsider and insider should work together.

Condition in the Sangha is quite a mess. Namu Dai Bosa chanting has no fire, monk/nun training has no spirit. Some sangha members prefer to act as "I do not care, this does not happen to me" (first category). Second category act "right or wrong he is my teacher, so defend him, banzai!" But majority, third category, try to push hard. First by moving his retirement ahead. Second, we are waiting the change of bylaws. Third, we are also want to see if ES and his wife really resign and what next.

Sincerely.

September 15, 2010 8:20 AM

Anonymous said...

Anon 9-15-10 and possibly others have said

"We also request patience from Maha-Sangha since we also fight within."

If you consider the situation as having existed with Zen Studies Society since the mid 1970's you might want to reconsider the request for patience and instead ask for intense pressure by more of the "Maha Sangha," Zen students, Buddhists, and others concerned with Shimano's behavior since the 1960's.

As an outsider it seems that the delay is not due to some kind of "due diligence" as it clearly and objectively decides what to do, but as political tactic by those who belong to what you call the "Second category." Those who say "right or wrong he is my teacher, so defend him, banzai!"

Patient or not the situation unfolds. Just be careful, listen and observe and think about the real reasons for the delays and exactly who is responsible for them and what their thinking is not just what they claim*. Take care of yourself and others as you will not be of much help if your own thinking is not clear.

* A commenter reported:

"A number of years ago, in discussing the "Shimano problem" with a senior American Zen teacher who has known Mr. Shimano for decades, he described Mr. Shimano as "a psychopath who has surrounded himself with co-psychopaths"."

This is saddening, frustrating, and even horrifying but it is essentially correct. The current local sangha really has to come to grips with this.

September 15, 2010 10:39 AM

Anonymous said...

What's next is people signing the petition. -- When we sign, we simply expresses our intention, the Board can choose to honor our publicly expressed intention or not. Signing in no way impedes or prevents the changing of the bylaws nor does it prevent the Shimano's from doing whatever they choose to do.

Signing the petition is a proactive step, a significant gesture, an expression of intent....

<http://www.sanghaconvergence.org/>

September 15, 2010 11:30 AM

Anonymous said...

And still Eido Shimano doesn't come and make any real statement. His "lack of words" speak volumes. Even a beginner in dokusan knows that no response is not an acceptable answer.

He manifests no wisdom. He manifests no compassion.

Caveat Emptor.

September 15, 2010 1:59 PM

Anonymous said...

September 13, 2010 7:07 PM

Anonymous said...

"I personally do not see anything wrong with the "co-psychopathic zen practice" and it may be appropriate for his extreme supporters. "

I would like to comment on my own post.

Sorry, the quoted sentence is an editing error. There was a clause in the middle of the sentence that I removed before posting, "I personally do not see anything wrong with [choosing one's own practice and if that is] the "co-psychopathic zen practice.".

My goodness, my proof reading skills need improvement.

September 15, 2010 3:45 PM

Anonymous said...

Anonymous wrote on Sept 13th: "Even now, his only two remaining loyal "Dharma heirs" are conducting an active telephone campaign attempting to influence Dharma teachers NOT to sign the petition calling for Shimano's removal."

Would someone with firsthand knowledge of these telephone calls please give us an account of what these two dharma heirs say is the harm in signing the petition? I know that Genjo's efforts have been sincerely directed towards removing Eido roshi from his teaching responsibilities and position of authority at ZSS, as well as restoring the sangha to health. If he believes there is harm in signing this petition, I'd like to know why. He may be mistaken, but I would like to consider his view ... as he has more knowledge of the internal situation at ZSS than I do.

September 17, 2010 10:52 AM

Anonymous said...

Genjo never issued any sort of apology for his AZTA posting... He was just plain wrong, and belittled the people who knew better.

September 17, 2010 8:43 PM

Anonymous said...

Ask him directly.... zssboard@gmail.com

and post his response here so we can all see.

September 17, 2010 9:39 PM

Anonymous said...

History has shown that the process of uncovering the truth of Shimano's legacy of harm and attempts to remove him from positions of power were pushed back under the rug and derailed by the ZSS Board. There are plenty of past board members who attest to that fact and some have signed the petition.

Each time, the people who wanted to do the right thing left in exhaustion or simply to protect their own character. This "right thing" was not malicious or vengeful. It was simply right and compassionate for future students and for helping to lift the burden from many students in the past (including students and board members who choose to leave behind time, energy and money spent).

The frustration of knowing the details and studying the details of this history is sometimes hard to take when teachers of Dharma are willing to take cues from two Dharma Heirs of Eido Shimano. Roko does not have a history of standing beside or for women who were sexually exploited by her teacher for 40 years. Genjo has been stumbling over and having to retract his own words for several months now. As a member of the "ethics committee" he publically announced statements about a recent "victim" that were intended to make Shimano appear less guilty.

By making calls and sending emails (which Genjo and Roko are doing) it appears that the American Zen Teachers Association is now acting and being used in the same way as former ZSS boards. How sad and tragic.

September 18, 2010 11:25 AM

Anonymous said...

How many of Eido's blessed are members of the AZTA? Are they using the AZTA member list to contact other teachers? I wonder what the AZTA's bylaws say about becoming a venue of a personal agenda? Assuming these calls and emails are being made.

September 18, 2010 8:31 PM

Anonymous said...

If you have copies of these emails, please post them here.

September 18, 2010 10:37 PM

Anonymous said...

AZTA has no bylaws.... as James Ford states here:

<http://monkeymindonline.blogspot.com/2010/07/doings-at-2010-american-zen-teachers.html>

The AZTA has prided itself on not being a professional organization. It has no bylaws, no officers and only two committees, a membership committee to review applications from Zen teachers who might want to get together with their sisters and brothers, and a committee to arrange each annual meeting.

September 19, 2010 10:44 AM

Anonymous said...

A yearly junket club.... how urbane!

September 19, 2010 2:22 PM

Anonymous said...

"How many of Eido's blessed are members of the AZTA?"

At least 2, Genjo and Roko. More I don't know.

"Are they using the AZTA member list to contact other teachers?"

Yes, and those teachers have been asked not to sign the petition.

"I wonder what the AZTA's bylaws say about becoming a venue of a personal agenda? Assuming these calls and emails are being made."

Bylaws or not, I hope that AZTA teachers will think for themselves, hold their own investigations, or contact the writer of the petition (Jiro) to hear his reasons for the petition even after Shimano appears to have "resigned".

The maha-sangha needs to know that they will use their standing, as individuals or as a group, to keep teachers like Eido Shimano from ever again having decades of access to students.

Every time a person signs that petition I feel that someone has at last come to stand beside me and say "that was no way to treat life". Thank you.

September 19, 2010 7:41 PM

Anonymous said...

Anon on 9/19 wrote: "The maha-sangha needs to know that they will use their standing, as individuals or as a group, to keep teachers like Eido Shimano from ever again having decades of access to students.

Every time a person signs that petition I feel that someone has at last come to stand beside me and say "that was no way to treat life". Thank you."

Yes, this is important. People beyond those who were directly injured, but are contemplating studying Zen, also need to know that Zen teachers will stand up when and if this sort of thing happens.

I also hope you will tell that to the ZSS ethics committee. It's an important part of the "truth and reconciliation" process for ZSS to acknowledge the decades of pain and isolation that some have felt as a result of Eido Roshi's misconduct. For some ZSS board members to be urging AZTA members not to sign the petition sends the opposite message, even though ES has resigned effective December 8th. More humility, and a little less defensiveness, is warranted.

September 20, 2010 7:37 AM

Anonymous said...

Genjo Marinello posted this on the Open Buddha forum on Sept 19th:

<http://www.openbuddha.com/2010/09/11/has-eido-shimano-really-resigned/#comments>

"Dear Dharma Brothers and Sisters,

I don't know how to put it more plainly, but please be assured that Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife Aiho-san did resign from the Board of Directors of the Zen Studies Society on July 4th, 2010. Their resignations were formally accepted by the Board, and we meet regularly by conference call, and when we are able in person, without their presence or undue influence. In all previous cycles of complaints, Roshi and Aiho-san have remained on the Board and this did indeed create circumstances that hindered the proper processing of similar complaints.

After this date the board has gone on to:

Engage the FaithTrust Institute to help us process ethics complaints and consult with us on how to best achieve a positive future for our Society.

We have instigated a complete rewrite of the ZSS bylaws that will be membership based, with a much more democratic structure, which we hope to have in place by late January, 2011.

We are pursuing a "forensic" audit of the whole financial structure of the organization so that we can understand all our assets and liabilities from the ground up.

After completing the first phase of our ethics investigation, we concluded that a sincere letter of apology was needed, along with a much earlier retirement date for Roshi. The board made this known to Roshi at our Labor Day weekend meeting with him.

The Board meets face to face with the New York Sangha Labor Day weekend and everyone is heard.

Eido Roshi writes his letter of apology that announces his retirement as Abbot at the close of this training season 12/8/10. Roshi's retirement is officially accepted and acknowledged by the Board.

Aiho-san is scheduled to step down as the director of Shobo-Ji, New York City Zendo, by the first of the year. A new director(s) is being selected and will be in place by January 1st, 2011.

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi will be installed as the new Abbot of the Zen Studies Society on January 2nd, 2011.

At every turn we have tried to respond promptly and with an open heart to every correspondence we have directly received to the Board or Ethics Committee.

As to Eido Roshi's relationship with the Zen Studies Society after 12/8/10, this is currently a matter of much discussion by the Board. I cannot go into details on this because we are in the middle of our own discernment. Speaking for myself, I hope that Eido Roshi will be able to assist Shinge Roko Roshi to learn the forms and ceremonies appropriate for her role as Abbot for the first six months of 2011. I also hope that Eido

Roshi will occasionally be invited as our retired founding abbot to give Teisho at either DBZ or New York City Zendo. However, we are all cognizant that Shinge Roshi will need to find her own footing and that an extended absence by Eido Roshi would probably be very helpful to make for a clean transition.

Finally, as I stated in my own newsletter, as “women come forward who are having trouble coping with the ramifications from these inappropriate relationships, the ZSS Board and I personally will do our best to be helpful...”

There are no Buddhas; if I meet one on the road of life, I have found a fraud. It is a delusion to believe that we are either Buddhas or bumpkins. Everyone should know that you will never find one without the other. The good news of Buddhism is that we are not just naked apes but also Buddhas.

I have been asked how could a “Roshi” be so blind? We all have blind spots; unfortunately, Eido Roshi’s have proven to be repeatedly dangerous to the very Followers of the Way he has otherwise given his life to. Very tragic for him, the Sangha and most of all those he has wounded.”
September 21, 2010 9:22 AM

Anonymous said...

oops - wording change - "resigned" is now "retired".

So - let's rewind and replay - Eido Shimano Roshi has not and will not resign. He will retire. An honorary title.

Yi yi yiii yi yiiiiiii! - anyone ever see "The Gods Must be Crazy"?
September 21, 2010 5:37 PM

Jiro Andy Atable said...

Following is a post I made to the Tricycle blog:

Judged by the standards of civil society, Buddhist law, clergy ethics, or any other standard applicable to the conduct of human affairs, Eido Shimano’s conduct has been a disgrace. It has been an affront not only to the monks and nuns of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, to the practitioners of New York Zendo Shobo-ji, to the Zen Studies Society Sangha, but to sincere Buddhist practitioners everywhere.

The repeated refusal of successive Boards of Directors of the Zen Studies Society, and now the current Directors as well, to apply minimal professional standards to their Abbot violates our sense of decency.

Given the undisputed record, nothing justifies The Zen Studies Society's Board of Directors delaying even one more day in acting decisively to remove Eido Shimano.

**

Yet The Board of Directors, speaking through Genjo Marinello, says: "As to Eido Roshi's relationship with the Zen Studies Society after 12/8/10, this is currently a matter of much discussion by the Board. I cannot go into details on this because we are in the middle of our own discernment."

I understand that at the Sept 4 meeting attended by the Board, some Sangha, and the Faith Trust Institute, the Institute made the recommendation that Eido Shimano be removed from The Zen Studies Society as soon as possible.

It is quite clear that the Board is trying to finesse a face-saving exit for Eido Shimano, which would give him a presence in the organization after he "retires". This despite the fact that the Directors recognize that there are "women... who are having trouble coping with the ramifications from inappropriate relationships" (with the abbot). If Eido Shimano's resignation is not a complete relinquishing of his spiritual and administrative presence in The Zen Studies Society, all the women who were victims will feel that the organization sanctions the abbot's behaviour and even rewards him for it.

Later, in his concluding paragraph, Genjo Marinello writes:

"We all have blind spots; unfortunately, Eido Roshi's have proven to be repeatedly dangerous to the very Followers of the Way he has otherwise given his life to. Very tragic for him, the Sangha and most of all those he has wounded."

Even recognizing that the Abbot has been "repeatedly dangerous to the Followers of the Way" the Board fails to act decisively on the resignation or removal of Eido Shimano. How very irresponsible and unprofessional.

**

If we are still trying to sort out what Genjo calls "our discernment" perhaps it is time to return to something simple and without obfuscation. What follows is Robert Aitken Roshi's summons to Eido Shimano in May this year:

"There are many reports of your abuse of women published on the web which indicate that you have been involved in breaking the precepts over a period of more than 40 years. I would like to urge you to come forth and make a statement in response to these accusations."

Sincerely yours,

Robert Aitken

September 21, 2010 5:45 PM

Anonymous said...

So there are three new entries in the American Zen dictionary/thesaurus:

“resignation” now = “retirement”

and

“cover-up” now = “discernment”

and

“sexual assault” now = “a blind spot”

How marvelously creative!

September 21, 2010 8:59 PM

Anonymous said...

Today I had a conversation with a PhD Jungian who was the director of a large organization in NYC. Her comment was "to those of us watching this from the outside, it's stunning. It's stunning to imagine that this man (Eido Shimano) continues as Abbot even for one day. It's shameless and has all the markings one expects to find in an unhealthy hierarchical cult. It's certainly not about liberation".

I apologize for having to remain anonymous, but I am a woman who became involved in a student/teacher sexual relationship with Eido Shimano (absolutely not initiated by me). I'm not willing to be more traumatized by this organization than has already happened. However, it's documented and clearly with no effect. I am willing to make this one post here and hope that it may move others to directly oppose the actions of the ZSS Board.

Some of you believe that the solution for this can only come from legal action taken by the women who have been abused. It would create pressure, but it will not create the long term change needed if the ZSS Board is determined to go forward with Eido Shimano in tow and all the deception and unwise leadings and "discernments" required to accomplish that.

One example - a spiritual leader of the Himalayan Institute (Swami Rama) was sued for 1 million dollars for sexual and emotional abuse of an adult woman student. Today, his pictures remain throughout the building and the organization has whitewashed his image. Occasionally a dedicated student discovers this, is upset and confused by it, and then leaves.

The organizations that truly turned around had strong pressure from inside and supportive peers on the outside. The end result was a clear separation, and not one that has to continually defend itself and write letters asking AZTA members to disregard a petition with views other than their own - not to mention documented facts.

The example of Swami Rama occurred in the 70's. It was easier to whitewash at that time. ZSS and Eido Shimano have stepped over plenty of people and basic ethical standards in the past. It's stunning to think that it could happen again.

I continue to practice, and clear untwisted zazen is a beautiful practice - even when it's difficult. It was not potentially liberating as long as I was hooked in any way to Eido Shimano. He's a very sick man. I don't feel vengeance toward him, but I do know him well and he is not anything close to what I would now choose as guide and mentor toward a process of "liberation". It's impossible if the tools are twisted beyond recognition. It's impossible for minds that twist and turn to right so many wrongs. I know. I was initially willing to lie about my own involvement - having been asked by Eido Shimano to do so.

Now I try to keep energy and time into untwisted people and tools, and a simple regular practice. My apologies again to the maha-sangha for my mistakes. "No more" is a fine phrase.

September 22, 2010 3:43 AM

Anonymous said...

This misconduct breached the trust with practitioners in many ways, and not just those who were directly harmed at the hands of Shimano. How can those whose previously engaged in ineffectual efforts to "address" Shimano's misconduct, or those who looked the other way or could not see, now have the audacity to continue themselves as part of a "healing process" or leadership?

September 22, 2010 9:45 AM

Anonymous said...

Here is Genjo Marinello's complete response over at Tricycle blog

<http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?p=2271#comments>

20. Genjo Marinello - September 18, 2010

“why not disclose to the public what the real terms of Eido’s departure... will be?”

"Indeed the ZSS Board will do just that once we have made up our own mind. However, let me review some of the steps that have been taken so far..."

I don't know how to put it more plainly, but please be assured that Eido Shimano Roshi and his wife Aiho-san did resign from the Board of Directors of the Zen Studies Society on July 4th, 2010. Their resignations were formally accepted by the Board, and we meet

regularly by conference call, and when we are able in person, without their presence or undue influence. In all previous cycles of complaints, Roshi and Aiho-san have remained on the Board and this did indeed create circumstances that hindered the proper processing of similar complaints.

After this date the board has gone on to:

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Finally, as I stated in my own newsletter, as “women come forward who are having trouble coping with the ramifications from these inappropriate relationships, the ZSS Board and I personally will do our best to be helpful...

There are no Buddhas; if I meet one on the road of life, I have found a fraud. It is a delusion to believe that we are either Buddhas or bumpkins. Everyone should know that you will never find one without the other. The good news of Buddhism is that we are not just naked apes but also Buddhas.

I have been asked how could a “Roshi” be so blind? We all have blind spots; unfortunately, Eido Roshi’s have proven to be repeatedly dangerous to the very Followers of the Way he has otherwise given his life to. Very tragic for him, the Sangha and most of all those he has wounded.”

September 22, 2010 10:26 AM

Anonymous said...

Dear Anonymous from 9/21 who is "a woman who became involved in a student/teacher sexual relationship with Eido Shimano (absolutely not initiated by me)."

Your post above is powerful and moving. I hope you will post it to the Tricycle blog where more people will see it.

<http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?p=2271#comments>

I think you can make a difference.

Thanks for coming forward.
September 22, 2010 10:30 AM

Anonymous said...

Mr. Andy Afable said:

"Even recognizing that the Abbot has been “repeatedly dangerous to the Followers of the Way” the Board fails to act decisively on the resignation or removal of Eido Shimano. How very irresponsible and unprofessional."

Just an outright lie. The ZSS Board is simply not acting as decisively as Mr. Afable wants it to now. Mr. Afable, as a longtime member/director at ZSS, had his opportunity to act--even start a petition--many years ago, but failed to address the historical grievances that he certainly had to know of at that time. Further, Mr. Afable's retirement pension rip-off (Shimano Archives #316) could be used as a bolster and justification for Mr. Shimano's own pension contract (which Mr. Afable, like many other ZSS Board Directors, probably knew of quite well), and which will probably bankrupt ZSS and put them out of existence. That contract has to be at least part of the reason that ZSS is forced to tread so carefully.

September 22, 2010 3:37 PM

Anonymous said...

If Shinge Roshi had an affair with Eido, then she should resign from the board of The Zen Studies Society as well for backing the sociopath until the end, in light of all the incriminating documents online recently. As heir and victim, she has a double conflict of interest in the matter.

September 22, 2010 8:19 PM

Anonymous said...

Actually a "triple" conflict -- Heir, victim and enabler.."

September 23, 2010 3:59 AM

Kobutsu Malone said...

Dear "anonymous - September 22, 2010" (Today I had a coversation with a PhD Jungian)

Your post is truly outstanding, cutting to the heart of the matter with stunning clarity.

Please contact me (in complete confidence), my contact information can be found at the bottom of the <http://www.shimanoarchive.com> site.

September 23, 2010 4:10 AM

Anonymous said...

Actually, anyone who becomes Abbot of ZSS should resign from the ZSS Board. That way, the Board can hold the Abbot accountable, which was never successfully done by past boards when the Abbot scandalized the organization.

September 23, 2010 6:54 AM

Anonymous said...

'If Shinge Roshi had an affair with Eido, then she should resign from the board of The Zen Studies Society as well for backing the sociopath until the end, in light of all the incriminating documents online recently. As heir and victim, she has a double conflict of interest in the matter."

Don't you have any sympathy for this victim? Why so hard on her? This is very complicated to talk about when you realize this victim of seduction now has become the one with all the spiritual authority within the organization, this authority being past onto to her by the one who initiated the abuse. How is it she has been able to do this? Maybe she can help other victims of Eido's exploitation, isn't this a possibility? If victims do come to her for counseling, isn't it possible she could aid in their healing now that she herself appears whole again?

September 23, 2010 11:26 AM

Anonymous said...

Woah... this is wishful thinking. It is not so simple, things get very complex when a "victim" takes part in covering up and ignoring the transgressions of the perpetrator. For decades this "victim" has functioned as a so-called voice of "reason," "endless gratitude" and "compassion" thereby silencing other victims and becoming an enabler.

September 23, 2010 2:28 PM

Anonymous said...

Two posts on the Tricycle blog:

<http://www.tricycle.com/blog/?p=2271#comment-201432>

30. Senjo Andrew Lagomarsino - September 23, 2010

Shinge Roshi as new abbot of The Zen Studies Society is a very poor choice. Throughout the latest sex scandal, she completely took Eido Roshi's side, contemptuously talked down to the other board members, acted pettily on numerous occasions, and actively tried to undermine the board's efforts to hold him accountable. Her actions have been extremely self-serving and not befitting a potential abbot. All this despite the possibility of having a two-fold conflict of interest: 1) as Dharma heir, and 2) allegedly having had past sexual relations with Eido Roshi, something she hasn't denied. Her installation will precede the completion of the structural changes in the board. I and a number of people are greatly disappointed in Roko's conduct and are concerned about her lack of spiritual authority and genuine leadership qualities.

Senjo Andrew Lagomarsino

31. Senjo Andrew Lagomarsino - September 23, 2010

I would like to add that Roko's recent lies and manipulative behavior are not unlike the some of the past maneuverings of Eido Roshi himself.

Senjo

September 23, 2010 9:53 PM

Anonymous said...

For an example of the self-serving enabling that has gone on over the decades, see how Shinge Roshi Roko Sherry Chayat glossed over the brave and painful decision made by her own teacher to break from Eido Shimano in "Subtle Sound: the Zen Teachings of Maurine Stuart". Compare that with Helen Tworok's 1989 work "Zen in America: Five Teachers and the Search for American Buddhism" where Roshi Maurine Stuart reported that she left because of Shimano's mistreatment of women.

September 24, 2010 9:52 AM

Anonymous said...

There is more than one precept involved here -- not just sexual misconduct, we also take up the precept on not spreading malicious gossip. The allegations about Roko are just that -- malicious gossip, not facts that anyone here knows from their personal knowledge to be true. Think about the malice and ill-will that causes you to spread such rumors without knowing whether they are true or not.

September 24, 2010 8:52 PM

Anonymous said...

"... not facts that anyone here knows from their personal knowledge to be true."

Anonymous, how to YOU know?

September 25, 2010 6:14 AM

Anonymous said...

Anonymous knows because Shinge Roshi never admitted, nor has anyone substantiated, the 'facts'.

September 25, 2010 1:21 PM

Anonymous said...

Anonymous said September 25, 2010 1:21 PM

"Anonymous knows because Shinge Roshi never admitted, nor has anyone substantiated, the 'facts'."

Here we go again!

Another apparent loyalist in a severely tainted organization.

The allegations about Shimano and Chayat will plague her to her grave.

Let's learn something here:

It probably would be best for Ms. Chayat to speak on these issues (sex with Shimano, enabling Shimano, etc.) herself, just as Aitken Roshi wanted Shimano to address issues regarding breaking the precepts.

September 25, 2010 8:56 PM

Anonymous said...

Anon 9/25, 8:56

"Here we go again!"

Another apparent loyalist in a severely tainted organization."

Exactly right. Loyal. Organization is indeed severely tainted by the actions of its abbot. I am part of the Sangha who ADMIRES what the ZSS Board is trying to do:

1. Separate from Mr. Shimano
2. Keep the organization viable on behalf of its Sangha.

I don't talk about Shinge Roshi personal allegations because I don't know anything about them, and buddy, neither do you.

Spike

September 26, 2010 6:09 AM

Anonymous said...

" I will not forsake you...nor yet will I deny. I would ask the same of you...but failing, will not die."

-Robert Hunter

September 26, 2010 1:14 PM

Joy said...

OK, Spike,

There's helpful information coming in on the Tricycle blog that explains the difficulties from a financial and legal side. Jiro has added to this in the past by also explaining bylaws of the board and other complications.

If complete separation is truly what is wished for and being worked out, then I'll prepare dinners for either Genjo or Roko - maybe both. I'll write requests for funding to help the board with legal action against Shimano. I'll clean Roko's house, baby-sit her kids.... Whatever.

However, it's been hard to see a complete separation as their destination for a number of strong reasons.

On personal accusations - some people who have attempted to bring out the truth have been maligned and criticized for years. There are "victims", like myself, who attempted to tell the truth but were shredded like paper. It takes immense strength, resilience, time, compassion and insight to survive this. Characterizations of "victim" can be quite absurd here and in related blogs.

I bring up these examples because because all of us are impacted, whatever the "side". It's not intended to replay past/present "hurts". It's intended to remind that Eido Shimano is a major source of this mess and he lost many opportunities to correct them. His actions are teaching some us more than we ever expected to learn, and he doesn't get the credits.
September 26, 2010 4:45 PM

Anonymous said...

"Anonymous knows because Shinge Roshi never admitted, nor has anyone substantiated, the 'facts'."

With this statement, the poster wants to say,
"It also applies to Shimano. He never admits any wrong doing, so was nobody there seeing with their own eyes what Shimano did".

Do you think it is live sexual entertainment?
Besides, a thief never admits he/she is a thief.
September 26, 2010 5:07 PM

Anonymous said...

"I don't talk about Shinge Roshi personal allegations because I don't know anything about them, and buddy, neither do you."

- Spike

Well, Spike why not find out about the allegations and try to put the pieces together and make some connections instead of exhibiting willing ignorance and arrogance: "I don't talk about Shinge Roshi personal allegations because I don't know anything about them, and buddy, neither do you."

In the meantime as the September 25, 2010 8:56 PM Anon wrote:
"It probably would be best for Ms. Chayat to speak on these issues (sex with Shimano, enabling Shimano, etc.) herself, just as Aitken Roshi wanted Shimano to address issues regarding breaking the precepts."

Think, Spike:
In all these years when has she EVER spoken out for the victims?
When has she gone on record criticizing Shimano?
Did she take the opportunity provided by Faith Trust to even try to put into effect their Sept 4 suggestion that Shimano step down immediately?

Does she have an articulated plan as Abbot?
It is far more likely that "Roko is a 'place holder' for Shimano. She will serve her master to hold the abbacy until the master manipulator makes a choice of a younger, (probably

Japanese), monk to fill the slot. He will never relinquish control and will con the Board just the same as he's conned all the prior Boards." (from an Aon on the Genkaku again blog)

Also, do not assume that a political entity such as a "board" speaks the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Omission of detail is frequently intentional and there is a also an intention that the missing detail will be erroneously inferred.

Look how resignation morphed into retirement.

This disgraceful mess can not possibly be the Zen of Shakyamuni - Bodhidharma - Rinzai - Hakuin.

September 26, 2010 10:32 PM

Anonymous said...

Sorry, anon, 10:32, not a thing you said in your posting proves the allegations against Shinge Roshi that you seem to HOPE are true actually are.

I believe Mr. Shimano in separation from ZSS, as scheduled, will never be able to "con the Board again". And he will never get an apprentice like Fernando Afable, petitioner extraordinaire, to write him up such a beautiful golden parachute financial deal again, either.

I will bet you the next abbot after Shinge Roshi is a born and bred American, but that's just a best guess.

"A zen master's life is one continuous mistake"

Spike

September 27, 2010 8:09 AM

Anonymous said...

"Think, Spike:

In all these years when has she EVER spoken out for the victims?

When has she gone on record criticizing Shimano?"

Uh, Starting in 1993? October 24th, according to Genkaku blog & shimanoarchive.

More has happened after.

September 27, 2010 10:40 AM

Anonymous said...

Here's an original idea: rather than recapitulate venomous allegations here, why not, in the tradition of investigative bloggerism, write Shinge Roshi and invite a direct response?

Or does that mean you would have to wash your hands first?

Spike

September 27, 2010 10:44 AM

Anonymous said...

"write Shinge Roshi and invite a direct response"

I did just this. She wrote back immediately and denied ever having had a sexual affair with Shimano. Denied this rumor caused her marriage to dissolve. Denied she slept her way to Dharma heirdom.

Mike

September 27, 2010 4:56 PM

Anonymous said...

Dear Spike:

We have already invited Ms. Chayat to address the issues. See above.

As for "Uh, Starting in 1993? October 24th, according to Genkaku blog & shimanoarchive."

Exactly what did she do? All she did was type things up and make sure this statement was included "We met in the spirit of love and gratitude for Eido Roshi, our directors, this practice and our Sangha."

The order of gratitude should be a clue to the way she thinks.

If you read the minutes from that meeting and think about what Chayat wrote up after the meeting for Shimano's consumption you may understand the conclusion that she's been skillful in whitewashing in her own way. It is clearer than ever that this is the wrong path to take in dealing with one who has whatever sick mind Shimano has its so insidious that the few still affiliated are exhibiting similar sicknesses.

Spike, please, be careful as to what you are assuming and saying. While personal loyalty may have some merit, but its very nature it puts blinders on those who feel and profess loyalty. Further it leads to very a difficult attachment.

From Aitken Roshi's final interview:

as posted in the Shimano Archive:

JW = Joel Whitney, a freelance reporter for Tricycle Magazine

RA = Robert Aitken

“JW – Is there anything you would like to say to the people for instance in his [Shimano's] circle, in his orbit who have maybe helped foster his behavior or enabled it?

“RA – They are a part of the problem.”

Can it be any clearer?

Be well, Spike.

September 27, 2010 7:44 PM

Anonymous said...

Spike said...September 27, 2010 10:44 AM

"Here's an original idea: rather than recapitulate venomous allegations here, why not, in the tradition of investigative bloggerism, write Shinge Roshi and invite a direct response?"

Ms. Chyatt has already been asked to speak out, by the Board of Directors itself. The Board has asked her repeatedly and publicly.

The Board has asked her to come forward, on Robert Aitken's blog. The Board has asked her to come forward, on the Tricycle blog. The Board has asked her to come forward, on the Genkaku blog, on Zen International Forum, etc.

The Zen Studies Society even issued a press release, asking her to come forward to the 'ethics committee' and the Board itself.

And what does she do? She sits there with her mouth shut. Ms. Chyatt is one of many women who has been sexually abused by Mr. Shimano, but her voice is silent.

And yet she calls herself a Roshi, a meditation master (aka a Zen Master), a master of herself, a teacher to be respected, and yet she does not have the self mastery to step up to the sexual abuse nor the self mastery to step away from the manipulation and the abuser himself.

The Board needs to rid itself of Ms. Chyatt, Mr. Marinello and Richard Rudin. They are poisoned and their poison is contagious.

...

The Board is governed by a democratic majority vote. There are still nine members. One voting block has 4 votes: Mr. Shimano (as the abbot), Chyatt, Marinello and Rudin. The other voting block has the majority: 5 votes.

Here's Seigan Ed Glasing's chance to redeem himself: he can raise his hand and make the motion to remove Chyatt from the Board.

Then raise his hand again and make the motion to remove Marinello.

Then raise his hand again to remove Rudin.

Who knows? Maybe the Board can clean itself up. Maybe the "bumpkins" on the Board, as Mr. Shimano so contemptuously refers to Westerners, can display some self mastery.

The "bumpkins" have been lied to enough to finally know what they're doing on a Board and they do have the wherewithal to push back. And I say that with a smile and kindness, because as they say, "How do you get good experience? Bad experience".

So please, take your experience and use it.

September 27, 2010 8:25 PM

Anonymous said...

"write Shinge Roshi and invite a direct response"

I did just this. She wrote back immediately and denied ever having had a sexual affair with Shimano. Denied this rumor caused her marriage to dissolve. Denied she slept her way to Dharma heirdom.

Show and prove not ironic.

The idea of direct communication with any of the principals in ZSS seems, to some, problematic.

Show and prove.

September 28, 2010 3:01 AM

Anonymous said...

" 'write Shinge Roshi and invite a direct response' "

'I did just this. She wrote back immediately and denied ever having had a sexual affair with Shimano. Denied this rumor caused her marriage to dissolve. Denied she slept her way to Dharma heirdom.' "

Accepting this denial at face value, it does not change the facts that along with many others, Shinge Roshi Sherry Chayat has, for whatever reason, enabled Eido Tai Shimano

Roshi's continuing harmful behavior. Out of deference to the victims, she should decline the position.

September 28, 2010 7:16 AM

Anonymous said...

As far as I know there were two things in regard to sexual allegation bt Shimano and Chayat:

- 1) whether they had sexual relationship
- 2) whether this sexual relationship ruined her marriage.

She answered only part 2) that her previous divorce was not caused by Shimano (it could be caused of her previous husband infidelity for example). She does not say anything about part 1) and it does not mean part 1) never happened.

Be that as it may, ethically she should resign from the board if she feels she has no clear eyes in regard to his relationship with Shimano.

September 28, 2010 12:44 PM

Anonymous said...

Please copy and paste the email you received from Roko here:

September 28, 2010 1:16 PM

Anonymous said...

Sorry, but if no show, than no prove (no tickee, no shirtee).

September 28, 2010 2:02 PM

Anonymous said...

One cannot publish a private email due to the request of its writer, unless the writer agreed or passed away. We have to respect this.

Another way to investigate is to ask members of Shobo-ji that attended a meeting on Sept 4 with the board and Faith Trust Inst. (by the way ... is there any follow-up of that meeting, particularly FTI suggestion?). Also Maha-Sangha can push Roko to publicly state what was happening. (Note: I will understand if

she confesses, because it already passes. By making everyone guessing, there is an indication of whitewashing if not deceiving). Another venue is by asking the women who attended the meeting in 1993 (?).

September 29, 2010 6:07 AM

Anonymous said...

Anon 6:07--You are a complete stranger to Ms. Chayat, yes? You claim she sends you a return email with details ... that are positive, self-purifying, but you say that she wants to keep these denials quiet? After letting you, a complete stranger, know them?

Sorry, this just doesn't wash. Let me invite Joe Wilson to respond ...

September 29, 2010 12:32 PM

Anonymous said...

Sexual involvement aside, isn't the fact that she served as an enabler and defender to Shimano enough grounds to expel her from the organization? I should think, given the severity of his transgressions, that this should be sufficient.

What we do need is for someone who is knowledgeable about this whole situation to type up a comprehensive document, citing sources to real documents, demonstrating her actions over the past however many years she has been involved. I understand that these exist on the shimano archive, but there are so many materials posted and it would help everybody out a lot.

And I think she should publicly address these rumors about her sexual involvement with her teacher. It would be irresponsible not to, especially given his history. Silence is not the correct course of action in this situation.

September 29, 2010 1:59 PM

Anonymous said...

When did she ever enable or defend his sex abuse? Give one example, and don't give me this s**t that it's all over the shimanoarchive, but too hard for you to find. One example.

Spike

September 30, 2010 2:55 AM

Anonymous said...

"What we do need is for someone who is knowledgeable about this whole situation to type up a comprehensive document, citing sources to real documents, demonstrating her actions over the past however many years she has been involved."

Agreed. One can start by reading Shinge Roshi Roko Sherry Chayat's own words (or lack of them) in her book about her own teacher Roshi Maurine Stuart ("Eloquent Silence"!) that describe key events and periods of time of Shimano's tenure.

There is no mention in her book of any discord or problems in ZSS concerning Shimano or the reason that Maurine Stuart left him. Stuart is reported in Tricycle Editor Helen Tworckov's 1989 book "Zen in America: Five Teachers and the Search for American Buddhism" to have said that she left Shimano because of his abuse of women.

Years later, Sherry Chayat left this monumentally courageous act out of her "biography" of her teacher.

An eloquently silent betrayal of women.
September 30, 2010 3:38 AM

Anonymous said...

If there is nothing happened it is very easy to refute all allegation. Unfortunately eloquent silence is sometimes misapplied.
September 30, 2010 6:13 PM

Anonymous said...

Anon 9/30, 3:38AM said:

"There is no mention in her book of any discord or problems in ZSS concerning Shimano or the reason that Maurine Stuart left him."

Subtle Sound (not Eloquent Silence, a collection of talks given by Nyogen Senzaki) is the collection of talks by Maurine Stuart, Roshi, to which you refer. The material in the book was not written by Roko Sherry Chayat--she edited it and wrote only the introduction. The material consists of talks that were 100% authored by Ms. Stuart. The book is not, and certainly is not intended to be, about Eido Shimano, Roshi.

In the intro (p. xxxii), the editor notes that Stuart Roshi conducted sesshins, "many of which were for women only, women who felt wounded by intimate relationships with male teachers", and further, that Stuart Roshi "spoke out against what she considered the principal failing: deception on the part of teachers unwilling to face the consequences of their actions" (p. xxxiii)." I think to most people in the Zen community, the references Ms. Chayat brings to light are understood.

Ms. Chayat was a friend and student of Ms. Stuart. Ms. Chayat conducted women's workshops at Beecher House (documented, for example, in shimanoarchive, 10/22/1993, Women's Workshop) which, similar to talks by Ms. Stuart, recommended things like

women-only sesshins, Big Sister-type relationships, etc. Here are a few items in the summary of the above-referenced workshop Ms. Chayat co-moderated:

“The views/concerns/questions expressed by one or more attendees were:

- Many of the women who have been involved with Roshi have been traumatized by the experience-some for years...
- People want Roshi to "stop it!," This wish is framed within the context of compassion and gratitude.
- The scandals have been destructive to the Sangha and to individuals.
- People are dismayed about Roshi's apparent view that members can easily be replaced and feel he does little to try to heal the wounds that have been created.”

Therefore in such instances Ms. Chayat has not been silent, either in speech or writing. She may not have spoken to you, but here she speaks with and gives voice to the women who really matter.

Ms. Chayat chose to stay affiliated with ZSS while maintaining her temple in Syracuse. You can speculate, and speculate only, as to for what reason(s). I personally never saw her at a sesshin at DBZ and don't know her frequency of contact with Mr. Shimano (although I did meet and talk with her at an O Bon). One thing is clear: as ordained by Stuart Roshi, and by receiving Dharma transmission from Soen Roshi (p. xxxiiii), she has a great heritage. And I believe the ZSS Sangha hopes that, as their prospective Abbot, she will serve them well.

Spike

September 30, 2010 6:59 PM

Anonymous said...

Thank -you, I do stand corrected about the title of her book "Subtle Sound". However, concerning your claim,

"The material in the book was not written by Roko Sherry Chayat--she edited it and wrote only the introduction."

Yes, indeed, she wrote a long biographical introduction, and there she goes on at great length about her close relationship with Maurine Stuart, about Shimano and the ZSS. Anyone reading that book would believe that all had been well at the ZSS during Maurine Stuart's years with Shimano. But things in fact were not well.

As for Sherry Chayat having

"recommended things like women-only sesshins, Big Sister-type relationships".

Though her intentions may have been good, what an incredibly lame attempt to prevent further mistreatment of women at the hands of Shimano(if that even is what it was). Why

not remove, or remove oneself in protest from the person who created the NEED for "Big-Sister" relationships and women-only sesshins?

Concerning the fact that-

"She may not have spoken to you, but here she speaks with and gives voice to the women who really matter."

I don't really understand your apparent contrast between ME and the "women who really matter" - perhaps that was not intended to come out that way?

I believe Shinge Roshi had a duty to speak, not only to me, but to every single new student, especially women, and above all vulnerable women with whom she had contact - to warn them about the truth of Shimano (instead of promoting him by continuously sending students to DBZ).

I am thoroughly dumbfounded by her actions and her silence about Shimano.

And with that, I bid this lineage farewell, with best wishes that all will somehow be well.
September 30, 2010 8:03 PM

Anonymous said...

Hello Spike,

I'm not too sure of what to say here, because I believe that you are a very sincere person and I base that belief upon your consistent manner of posting.

Unfortunately, and I really don't want to hurt your feelings here, but you are very much mistaken in your perceptions of Ms. Chyatt.

A simple reality check is in order: if you believe that she actually wrote the document from the 1993 womens meeting and is so outspoken in her criticisms of Mr. Shimano, then why isn't she writing now?

Ms. Chyatt did not write the document from the October 1993 meeting that you quote from in your September 30, 2010 6:59 pm post.

It is not within the capacity of her character to create such a document nor is it within her character to be forthright; her character is one of omission and concealment.

Yes, Ms. Chyatt signed the document, as did all of the other participants in the meeting. The document is a composite of all comments that were made at the meeting, it is the minutes of the meeting, and as such, it was signed off on by all participants.

It is inaccurate and misleading to attribute any of those comments to Ms. Chyatt herself.

In fact, Ms. Chyatt's role in that meeting was one of her least shining moments. I will elaborate on that point, but for now, I felt that a definite refutation of your argument was required.

Your confidence is misplaced.

The Board should rid the Zen Studies Society of the poisoned shimano-dharma and remove Ms. Chyatt, Mr. Marinello and Mr. Rudin before the board misses its opportunity. Chyatt-Marinello-Rudin should have no voting capacity; their advice can be sought, if thought necessary, by telephone.

October 1, 2010 12:16 AM

Anonymous said...

Old Spike starting to geeze. Stuart got tranny, not Chayat. Chayat just train with Soen (plus Yasutani Roshi and, of course, ES).

October 1, 2010 3:06 AM

Anonymous said...

Thank you Spike. A clear voice in the cacaphony! Thank you very much.

October 1, 2010 9:11 AM

Anonymous said...

Spike,

"One thing is clear: as ordained by Stuart Roshi, and by receiving Dharma transmission from Soen Roshi (p. xxxiiii), she has a great heritage."

Regarding to the reference to page xxxiiii or, rather xxxiv, I do see that the editor, Ms. Chayat, wrote that Maurine Stuart ordained her, i. e. Ms. Chayat; however you also wrote "and by receiving Dharma transmission from Soen Roshi (p. xxxiiii), she has a great heritage."

The reference is misleading. No where in the book is a claim made that Ms. Chayat received Dharma transmission from Nakagawa Soen Roshi, nor from Maurine Stuart.

It appears that her Dharma transmission relies completely on the word of Eido Tai Shimano, so, unless we have a more traditional recognition by at least two other Roshis both of whom have more substantial and legitimate credentials, we do have a major obstacles to her being a desirable prospective abbot of ZSS. Not only are your contentions regarding Ms. Chayat's concerns for the ZSS sangha and the women are just a matter of interpretation, but also, the legitimacy of her Dharma Heritage is suspect as they appear to rely solely on Shimano.

From the archives we have information that Shimano and the board declared himself and Zen Studies "Independent" see

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19821019_ZSS_Board.pdf

Further, from the archives we have information which shows Soen Roshi's dissatisfaction which Shimano's behavior going back to 1964 (see for example

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19821027_Zournas_Shimano.pdf and other documents from that time,)

Even further, we have information that Shimano is not considered to be a full Dharma Heir of Nakagawa. For example see

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/19841120_Aitken_Rosemary.pdf

and documents preceding that one in which Aitken Roshi persistently attempted to discover Eido's spiritual status with respect to Soen.

I think it fair to conclude that since actions speak louder than words, the fact that Shimano was not seated with Soen's heirs and other roshi at Soen's funeral that Soen had either not considered Eido a full heir to start with, or withdrew Inka Shomei. This should be a matter of record and should be clarified by the Zen Studies Board (just as Kapleau's transmission problems were address by his heirs).

So, while some of the ideas mentioned about reorganizing Zen Studies seem reasonable, additional approaches to Zen Studies' problems may be needed to clean up the organization from a religious and spiritual perspective particularly with regard to Dharma Heritage. Perhaps, if Yamakawa Roshi goes to Dai Bosatsu as originally announced, he should be consulted with, plans formulated and announced.

October 1, 2010 11:11 AM

Anonymous said...

I agree with Anon re Spike. He is clear and consistent in resisting the double barrel shotgun let 'er rip approach to scattering lies and innuendo whenever and where ever this is done.

He is willing to use a tool championed by those who prosecute EZ, the shimanoarchive, to counter what is claimed and willing to hold others to this standard.

He is willing to take on this kind of heat.

Good for him.

Mike

October 1, 2010 5:39 PM

Anonymous said...

Spike never said anything about Chayat transmission from ES (to many it is not a badge of honor), only training heritage of Soen and Yasutani, and ordination from Stuart.

Spike already cop to his error re. Soen transmission statement. Late at night, Spike geezes.

"Ms. Chayat's concerns for the ZSS sangha and the women are just a matter of interpretation"

?? Oy!

Spike

October 2, 2010 5:41 AM

Joy said...

Spike and Mike,

Are you the same person?

October 3, 2010 5:41 AM

Anonymous said...

Spike,

Glad to see that you recognized that Chayat's claim to "transmission" comes solely from Shimano.

The identity of the author of the comment "Old Spike starting to geeze." was neither evident nor obvious.

"Geeze" isn't a commonly used term; it isn't in most dictionaries.

Even if one uses something like the <http://www.urbandictionary.com/> the definitions are very appropriate.

As as to "?? Oy!" with respect to Ms. Chayat's words and behavior towards Shimano's behavior. It is completely unjustified. Let's face it you have went out of your way to reinterpret events to make her look good.

Let's be clear. Shinge never spoke out clearly and openly against Shimano's misconduct. She didn't write about it publicly when she had the opportunity Shinge's Dharma Heritage solely depends on Shimnano's say. She has been part of the problem for far too long. Consequently she is not someone who should be taking over Zen Studies Society.

October 3, 2010 9:12 AM

Anonymous said...

Joy,

Mike is Mike.

Spike's Spike, a geezing biker, as far as Mike knows.

We share a concern for obstructing innuendo as opposed to articulated facts or well reasoned opinions.

Mike (see Tricycle) is finding he has not much left to contribute and thought he had checked out.

Mike will not be giving up on this necessity. He must however stop checking on how it's falling out. ;)

Mike

October 3, 2010 5:17 PM

Anonymous said...

"Shinge's Dharma Heritage solely depends on Shimnanao's say."

Yes, as far as transmission, but she has been taught by Soen, Yasutani, and Stuart, who first ordained her, and has the support of Sangha who benefit from that teaching heritage, and over the years also probably have gotten to know and understand her much better than you possibly could.

"Let's be clear. Shinge never spoke out clearly and openly against Shimano's misconduct."

You can't prove that's true. In Board meetings, in talks at Hoen-ji and other places, or directly with Sangha members--all uncompiled--it seems doubtful to me that the issues with Mr. Shimano never came up in any circumstance. But you could be exactly right. Possibly some of this is, for her, an intensely personal matter, as some have alleged that Mr. Shimano had sex with her, making her, by FTT's and other definition, a de facto victim of sex abuse.

Of course, one of the most difficult things, if Ms. Chayat was a victim of sex abuse by Mr. Shimano, is for a victim to in any way confront her abuser. Out of the estimated large number of abuse victims, how many have? The possibility that a victim of alleged abuse by Mr. Shimano is poised to assume the Abbacy is, to me, a form of justice.

I do not believe that she will be "taking over the Zen Studies Society". Not only do I believe she will not be President of the Board, but I believe she will resign from it at the

time of her appointment. I just do not believe ZSS will make this same mistake with anyone ever again.

Spike, the Geezer
October 3, 2010 5:41 PM

Anonymous said...

Spike, the biker ... can you guarantee
"Not only do I believe she will not be President of the Board, but I believe she will resign from it at the time of her appointment"

I do not understand: "but she has been taught by Soen, Yasutani, and Stuart, who first ordained her, and has the support of Sangha who benefit from that teaching heritage".

What kind of benefit is that? So did you benefit from me because I was a grand-student of Albert Einstein? (yes I was a grand student of him).

October 3, 2010 7:08 PM

Anonymous said...

"Shinge's Dharma Heritage solely depends on Shimnanso's say."

"Yes, as far as transmission...." Nothing else is relevant. Not further discussion is even necessary.

But there are additional secondary reasons for her to not to be abbot:

""Let's be clear. Shinge never spoke out clearly and openly against Shimnanso's misconduct.""

"You can't prove that's true."

Well, at least it's a given that she has not written about it.

"But you could be exactly right."

So, you seem to agree there's nothing on record.

To some of us, that is cause for great concern.

"if Ms. Chayat was a victim of sex abuse by Mr. Shimnanso, is for a victim to in any way confront her abuser."

Now this is where it seems her supporters are willing to taken both sides of the coin whichever is convenient. When her supporters want to slam people they say "you can't

prove her affair with / abuse by Shimano." When they want to elicit sympathy for Chayat you posit the possibility she's an abuse victim.

Abused and yet she stayed. Not abused but did not speak out openly and often on behalf of the sangha. And she may not have spoken out at all.

"The possibility that a victim of alleged abuse by Mr. Shimano is poised to assume the Abbacy is, to me, a form of justice. "

And this you consider this "one-up-man-ship" in response to the oft denied yet oft accepted alleged tragedy to makes her a good choice for the abbacy?

All of this just sounds so wrong, viscerally. What Anon September 30, 2010 8:03 PM wrote seems to be the natural response:

"And with that, I bid this lineage farewell, with best wishes that all will somehow be well."

I can certainly sympathize with those who have said that a lineage such as this will just die out.

In any case, the wise and the cautious will avoid it; even you must admit avoidance is the most reasonable response.

October 3, 2010 8:05 PM

Anonymous said...

You forgot to say "I hope!"

Bye

Spike

October 4, 2010 6:33 AM

Anonymous said...

Ocotber 3 -

" September 30 ' And with that, I bid this lineage farewell, with best wishes that all will somehow be well.' "

"I can certainly sympathize with those who have said that a lineage such as this will just die out."

"In any case, the wise and the cautious will avoid it; even you must admit avoidance is the most reasonable response."

October 3, 2010 -
 "You forgot to say 'I hope!' "

Yes, indeed, I HOPE the Shimano lineage will die out.

May It Be So
 October 6, 2010 8:13 AM

Komjo Mallooney from Osaka said...

Can we please stop with this bullshit ? This blog is really a waste of time!

October 6, 2010 2:10 PM

Anonymous said...

Spike first attended sesshin at DBZ in 1991, took vows in 1994, and now just attends occasional O Bon. Back in those days, there were probably others who came to sesshin only, and were not aware, as the Board of Directors was, and certainly some Shobo-ji and DBZ residents were, of the problems with Mr. Shimano. Thanks to the Shimano archive of Kobutsu Malone, albeit appearing quite late in this history, we all can know a lot, if we take the time.

Spike did sesshin back then with Kobutsu once. We sat across from each other at several meals. Spike is left-handed—put sticks on left instead of right. If Kobutsu could have made those sticks levitate over to the ‘right’ side, he probably would have. Sorry Kobutsu!

Spike was guest student at SFZC, Tassajara, Green Gulch, Mt. Shasta (chanted sutras in Gregorian mode!), and Rochester (they have the most beautiful English translation you could hope for of the sutras—Spike still does their version of Heart Sutra as his heart practice). This was back in the early 70’s—Spike hitchhiked to all these places courtesy of rides from many kind hippies and a few vets. Met Tommy Dorsey, Ed Brown, and was surprised on a solitary walk in Tassajara by Richard Baker—walked and talked with him. Kennet was in England, and Kapleau was, at that time, unapproachable. All these places and the people in them, not just heart teacher, have influenced and helped Spike.

Spike has never had a teacher other than Eido Shimano, Roshi. Spike has seen and heard many, many Zen lecturers. Spike strongly suspects that Aitken Roshi achieved the ability to use ‘skillful means’, just as Eido Roshi certainly did. I owe Eido Roshi. True, it is the consensus that he has behaved immorally, but that does not cancel the fact that he has also done good on behalf of many students. I know this for a fact, because I have been his student, and have talked with many other students. Spike did worse things in Nam than Eido Roshi ever dreamed of. Spike is lucky to have any teacher.

Spike is now retired, and just drives a school bus, because the seat is good to his bad back, gets him off his arthritic feet, and because he loves children. Before that Spike went

back to graduate school at age 48 and got an MSW, then a professional LCSW. For many years, Spike led groups at a drug and alcohol abuse clinic for mainly black, mainly male, court-mandated ex-offenders (it's a toss-up as to Spike's favorite clients: the children and families whom he later worked with, or the sometimes violent ex-felons trying to figure out how not to drop a urine before each group meeting, because if they got violated it was back to jail).

Spike believes that 99.44% of all people can be rehabilitated; problem is, we just haven't yet figured out how to be successful in all such cases. Some ex-felons in Spike's groups relapsed; two got killed on the street. Others went through as many as five courses of therapy before completing rehab, staying clean, and staying out of jail. Spike therefore believes that a guy like Eido Roshi can also be rehabilitated, unless he dies first, is carrying a psychopathy Dx, or someone proves otherwise. Maybe hypersexuality will one day be recognized as a clinical disorder, and maybe that is his problem. To Spike, the effort to rehabilitate is always worth it.

I know personally several Hoen-ji members, and they vouch for Ms. Chayat. That is good enough for me. She has her work cut out for her, and I hope she is up to it. I have exchanged emails with Mr. Joe (Genjo) Marinello, and I hope to one day meet him in person. He has straightforwardly answered my questions, many in detail, and has encouraged my suggestions. I wish the best to everyone at Early Light Zendo, and I hope their lineage thrives. Junpo Kelley is an established teacher, and I hope his lineage thrives, too. I hope ... I hope, that all of these people and others like them in ZSS will continue to make their best effort on behalf of the Dharma and the lineage that each of us shares.

No reply is necessary.
October 6, 2010 2:55 PM

Anonymous said...
sho jo mu hen sey gan do.
October 6, 2010 5:37 PM

Anonymous said...
I have read what is apparently Spike's autobiography. He seems to feel he has a checkered background, i. e. visiting many Zen Centers, doing social work with "ex-felons" and children in his later years, and "Spike did worse things in Nam than Eido Roshi ever dreamed of. Spike is lucky to have any teacher."

Spike evidently believes he is strongly drawn to Shimano and considers him his "teacher." Further, Spike expresses great certitude in his support of Shimano, Shinge, and Genjo.

I get that this resonates for him. Indeed many people felt drawn to begin Zen practice at one of the two temples.

However, I don't get why Shimano's gross misconduct, and the enablement of that misconduct by many board and sangha members for almost 50 years does not really bother him enough to want to disassociate himself from Shimano even while maintaining his practice of zazen and, perhaps, a certain gratitude towards Shimano et al for the introduction.

Perhaps the following is a clue to the nature of what seems to me like a dysfunctional spiritual relationship:

"Spike therefore believes that a guy like Eido Roshi can also be rehabilitated, unless he dies first, is carrying a psychopathy Dx, or someone proves otherwise. Maybe hypersexuality will one day be recognized as a clinical disorder, and maybe that is his problem. To Spike, the effort to rehabilitate is always worth it."

I wonder how many of that sangha who remain affiliated with the temples and Shimano have this sort of connection. I wonder how many actually examine that connection and understand it.

I also wonder how much effort Spike and others like Spike have put into really trying to facilitate Shimano's rehabilitation. Or, if by allowing Eido's great flaws to continue relatively unabated fulfills some psychological need.

"May we completely understand the Tathagatha True Meaning"
October 7, 2010 8:57 AM

REDDirt said...

Spike,

I sit at Chobo ji with Genjo Marinello.

He has my e mail address.

w palms together,

Mike

October 7, 2010 9:12 AM

genkaku said...

"Komjo Mallooney from Osaka said...

Can we please stop with this bullshit? This blog is really a waste of time!"

Interesting koan, perhaps: Is it bullshit to continue this bullshit or simply another form of bullshit to fall silent?

I think it was Aitken (but maybe it was Kapleau) who once commented, "Silence is golden and sometimes its color is pure yellow."

October 7, 2010 10:41 AM

Anonymous said...

Spike has personally written to Mr. Shimano asking him to resign from ZSS. Spike favors 100% separation between ZSS and Mr. Shimano, and has written to the Board in support of this.

Spike does not back off of his statement that Mr. Shimano can rehab/be rehabbed.

Other than communication directly with the Board, with Mr. Marinello, and with Mr. Shimano, Spike has put zero personal effort into trying to help Mr. Shimano. Tell us if you have done even this much, since you think this matter is important.

Anon 10/7, 8:57, you make too many assumptions. This is why Spike has said you forgot to say "I hope!".

Spike

October 7, 2010 10:46 AM

Anonymous said...

Anon,

"I don't get why ..."

That's right, you don't. Perhaps it's compassion and the acceptance of such in return. Perhaps it's the attempt at a balanced view of human frailty and human strength as not two.

" I wonder how many of that sangha who remain affiliated with the temples and Shimano have this sort of connection. I wonder how many actually examine that connection and understand it."

Can you explain what your examination of the assumed connection leads you to understand?

" ... the effort to rehabilitate is always worth it."

Yes, it is.

October 7, 2010 12:28 PM

Anonymous said...

Dear Anonymous 8:57 AM,

You write, "I don't get why ..."

Here is another view on this.

"Life is very nice as it is without solutions. If you want to be a living question mark, by all means go ahead and be one. But if you expect answers you defeat yourself.

Continually going about asking 'why why why' is useless unless you are content to ask without expecting an answer." Thomas Merton

October 7, 2010 12:57 PM

Anonymous said...

Spiker da biker,

99.44% ?

Dint ya leave oudda a decimal pint er two ther?

yers truly

Oudda da past

October 7, 2010 1:11 PM

Joy said...

Spike,

I've been thinking about you and your post of Oct 6 - 2:10 on and off throughout the day.

You packed alot of life into one post. Thank you for speaking from your heart. I'm listening from mine.

I hear a man who has suffered and who now looks with a basically kind and well intended heart to bring together forces of life that are powerfully oppositional.

There are times when it feels a bottom line is reached and I can stretch out my hand to shake yours - or better - a bow. This is despite the fact that you and I have had oppositional experiences and outcomes with Shimano. I'm not going to even begin to explain the reason for this response or why I think it important enough to post - best to just let it be.

Tomorrow morning it's back to the cushion at sunrise for me. After that I'll consider trying to explain why the "problem" is NOT hypersexuality. Probably not. (just couldn't let that one slide)

October 7, 2010 6:34 PM

Anonymous said...

Thank you Joy. You know much, much better than Spike what the problem is, because, as you have written, you have suffered assaultive, most deeply hurtful experience(s), as well as the outcome of such. You owe no one an explanation (certainly not Spike).

No one can change his or her experience, only its narrative. I have witnessed and can testify to this: there is real heroism in trying to heal.

Spike

October 7, 2010 9:51 PM

Anonymous said...

Hmm...hyper-sexual, rehabilitate, change, etc.

Mr. Shimano is just a promiscuous guy who indiscriminately has sex with people. Let's not make more of it than it is.

And he has found a line of work that allows him the privacy and access to stalk his victims in a religious setting. We've watched him do it, abuse someone in dokusan and then stalk them in the zendo for the rest of sesshin.

Predatory, voyeuristic, checking out the student's reaction, wondering if they will tell someone, trying to guess if they'll come back for another dokusan, plotting how he will discredit them if they tell on him.

He's a pervert. He's lived his whole life this way. 46 years of documented sexual abuse. A sicko, a weirdo, a liar, a creep.

But also: he is an employee of a corporation.

And in 2010, crooked employees who disrupt a business with sexual abuse are just plain fired. Nobody worries anymore about why they do it or what they will do with the rest of their lives. Employment terminated, goodbye.

And after 5 decades of perversion, who cares??

October 8, 2010 11:53 PM

Anonymous said...

Who cares? People who honor their Buddhist vows.
October 9, 2010 5:06 AM

Anonymous said...

People who follow their Buddhist vows promise to emancipate all beings. If the emancipation of a set of beings involves moving one being to a place where he can no longer enslave others, and we do so, then our vow is fulfilled.
October 9, 2010 11:46 AM

Anonymous said...

There is only one cure for this mess.

Time.

October 9, 2010 2:20 PM

Anonymous said...

Not ours, yours.

October 9, 2010 2:45 PM

Anonymous said...

"Not ours, yours."

My oh my! You must be something really, really special to have your very own time!

Perhaps you can stop it?

October 9, 2010 5:52 PM

Joy said...

Today was 10 10 10 350.org. It made history as having the greatest number of people and organizations across the planet uniting to bring awareness to issues of climate change.

I discovered this at the website "ECOLOGICAL BUDDHISM: A Buddhist Response to Climate Change"

Here's a quote on that site from one of the signers of the Shimano Resignation Petition.

"The Bodhisattva precepts boil down to one essential principle: not to live at the expense of other beings.....When I recognize that my life and everything in it has been freely given to me, how can I deny this gift to all other beings, and to the planet itself? Take only what one needs and allow all things to be free and fully themselves."

And from Robert Aitken Roshi (and I believe he was one of the founding contributors) at the same website:

"Something, certainly. Our practice of the Brahma Viharas—kindness, compassion, goodwill and equanimity would be meaningless if it excluded people, animals, and plants outside our formal Sangha. Nothing in the teachings justifies us as a cult that ignores the world. We are not survivalists. On the contrary, it is clear that we're in it together with all beings."

Doing my part for today - and highly relevant here.
October 10, 2010 6:59 PM

Olivia said...

I've been reflecting on what can happen next regarding the facts that clearly show the ZSS board has no intention of keeping to their statements of having Shimano Step Down, Resign (which has become retire with ongoing guidance to the organization and presence in the Zendos), and not take on new students as will be happening during Harvest Sesshin. Not a single important statement made by Genjo for the ZSS Board on these blogs is holding up.

Zen teachers who received letters from Genjo and Roko asking them not to sign Jiro's petition could take note of this outcome. It includes Faith Trust's continued disagreement with the ZSS board decision to not have Shimano resign immediately (as of Sept 4 meeting).

The quickly created ethics committee to provide something other than an apology to women sexually exploited has no plan in place. Imagine the potential trauma for a woman to present her story to such a committee.

There are also many men and women who gave time, talent and energy to the organization who left because of the unethical practices of Shimano. These were not light or occasional happenings. It includes the time around another scandal when Shimano closed down the Zendos and invited back who he wanted. Such power to a man who is both Abbott and Director of the Board.

Granted there are people who have tried over the years such as the group of Zen Teachers in 1995, and Adam's letter in 1982. This year such letters and appeals don't end up in a filing cabinet or waste baskets. Both the appeals and the process of how Shimano and the ZSS board respond are public.

Thinking...Listening...
October 18, 2010 5:44 AM

Anonymous said...

Holy shoot. Current episode happened not only with one student ... read this.

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20100912R_Xxxxx_ZSS.pdf
October 20, 2010 6:17 AM

Anon15 said...

Thank you 20100912R_Xxxxx_ZSS for making your correspondence with the Zen Studies Society available to the archives.

I appreciate the public spirit you display in contacting the Board, despite having little interest in associating with Mr. Shimano, and the public value in sharing the process online.

A very good deed, indeed. Thanks.
October 20, 2010 7:55 PM

Anonymous said...

Maybe Xxxxx should respond to the Committee's offer to meet with Shimano, but insist that it be at a neutral location and that she bring her own "third party monitors".... say, Kobutsu Malone and Jiro Atable.

It'd be interesting to see how they would respond to that!
October 21, 2010 2:32 AM

Angelo said...

Eido Shimano -- the John Gotti of American Zen Buddhism.
October 21, 2010 5:41 AM

Joy said...

Very funny, Oct 20, 7:55
You can invite me too.

That aside, I was stunned to see that Shimano took charge of the process by requesting a face to face meeting, and when Xxxx refused for strong/focused reasons it apparently ended the process of their interactions with her.

I've always wondered what the ZSS Board/Ethics Committee meant by "reconciliation". It's certainly leaving out any phase of "restorative justice" which is usually part of any decent reconciliation process.

Here's her response to the face to face meeting. This is after she has been willing to give the traumatic details of her story to two different members of the ethics committee. All of that information was given to Shimano who then asked for the face to face meeting. Nothing in her writing was said with any vicious or revengeful intent. This woman is incredibly honest about herself and the "actions" of Shimano.

From Xxxx...

“I want to make it clear to you that I came forward because I believe that it is best that Eido Shimano resign immediately. My intention was to provide to you what I know to support this opinion,”

I don't think Roshi has true remorse and I think it would be sad to be an audience to more lies.”

The response to this from the new President of the Board was ...

“Thank you for your reply. The Board is doing everything it can to make the transition to the future a smooth one considering the current turmoil. We and especially I wish you and your family good health and contentment.”

October 21, 2010 7:01 AM

kobutsu malooney roshi said...

I am the hooded monk from the hoodie monks. Who still takes me serious is a dipstick!

October 21, 2010 1:57 PM

Anonymous said...

Instead of humiliating the students by exposing them to an 'ethics committee' that is more wounding than it is healing, the Zen Studies Society should just ask Mr. Shimano for *his own* list of sexual offenses.

Wouldn't that be easier? Cleaner? More compassionate?

The whole process is sadistic. What more does the Board really need to know before they ban him from the corporate property?

October 21, 2010 2:31 PM

Anonymous said...

To an outsider, a Maha-Sangha member, but not connected to the Zen Studies Society, the email exchange between the student and the ZSS “Ethics Committee” is shocking to say the least. It would appear the committee has no charter, no carefully considered guidelines or standards of ethical conduct for themselves let alone Eido Shimano. That committee has shot itself in both feet in the way the handled the information they received from Xxxxx.

Ideally, an “Ethics Committee” should base itself on a set of rules that regulate what behavior is considered ethical – The Ethical Guidelines. The Committee then conducts investigations into whether the guidelines have been violated. The committee should then make recommendations to the Board of Directors on what action, if any, should be taken as a result of the investigation. The committee should provide advice to the Board before it takes action, so as to avoid uncertainty over ethical culpability.

The way they operated in the instant case, going directly to Eido Shimano with their findings is tantamount to subverting the power of the Board and revealing confidential information to an established, even admitted, sexual predator. I had hopes for Genjo Marinello and Shinge Chayat but now I’m befuddled at how they are on the ZSS Board of Directors and allowed this “Ethics Committee” debacle to take place.

That email exchange revealed to me that the two people I had put faith in to “right” the “wrongs” of Eido Shimano are not at all prepared to do what is ethically mandated. Perhaps it is flaw in their training? Something that Shimano never taught – How could he possibly?

To hear that Eido Shimano would preside over a Jukai ceremony, giving the “precepts” (specifically against sexual misconduct and lying), at this time is a stunning insult to The Buddhadharm. Marinello and Chayat as the two Dharma heirs let this happen with no comment, not a word of objection and no outcry!

October 26, 2010 9:13 AM

Anonymous said...

"To hear that Eido Shimano would preside over a Jukai ceremony, giving the “precepts” (specifically against sexual misconduct and lying), at this time is a stunning insult to The Buddhadharm. Marinello and Chayat as the two Dharma heirs let this happen with no comment, not a word of objection and no outcry!"

Second hand "smoke" is even more dangerous.

October 26, 2010 12:36 PM

Anonymous said...

If second hand smoke is more dangerous, then they should all be dead by now, no? Or, just spiritually sickened.

I hope they find clear unpolluted air and allow the karmic drift to come to a halt. Enough.

October 27, 2010 1:11 AM

Anonymous said...

ok

October 29, 2010 5:11 PM

Anonymous said...

An article about the Shimano Resignation just hit: <http://tinyurl.com/Cabaret-Petition>
November 5, 2010 7:47 AM

Anonymous said...

A friend of mine just sent me a note:

"I just came back from Harvest Sesshin at DBZ...I realize that it may not have been the most ethical decision to support Eido's actions (through attendance and money), but I just really wanted to do Sesshin again...

He announced during the Jukai ceremony that as of Dec 8th he will be 'emancipated' from his Abbot responsibilities; and that this decision is one he has been contemplating for the past year (!). He was totally skirting the issue. No mention of the actual reason why he's stepping down. During closing ceremony he announced that although he will not be Abbot, he will remain dedicated to his students; meaning, he'll be coming back. The lack of honesty and clarity on the matter was particularly offensive after the new Jukai students had to read the 10 Precepts and Purification."

November 10, 2010 6:48 AM

Anonymous said...

How many new Jukai students? Anyone know? Any women?
November 12, 2010 5:08 PM

David said...

A Rainy, November 21, 2010

I see so many old friends posting here. On one hand it makes me so happy, and on the other it saddens me due to what it has taken to bring everyone together.

First, I want to thank Aitken Roshi and Jiro Osho-Roshi for taking the steps they have taken. Why? Not because I believe in a good lynching (and I say this as a warning to us all), but because they are (I believe) acting out of, at its root, great compassion. It is compassion for the victims, but also compassion for Eido Roshi. To use a Christian metaphor, there are souls here to be saved. Aitken, Jiro, and others like Kobutsu take difficult action for the first time I have seen around this debacle in the 30+ years I have been involved with ZSS/Shobo-ji/Kongo-ji.

I raise this point because I myself am a victim of abuse by a family member, a person whom I trusted and who should have protected me, and I understand some of the nuances of the power play that is involved in this behavior.

What I want folks to remember is that in most cases the abusers were themselves victims, and they are hopelessly caught trying to unravel the karmic tentacles of the abuse. While I in no way condone what has gone on, I will not give into a lynch mob mentality to deal with this and I will not give up my compassion for any of the victims or for Eidoshi.

I sadly know who some of the victims are. I also know of one married Nordic woman who most of the ordained male residents at DBZ slept with during her Kessei – this was during a difficult period in her life, which is what led her to DBZ. I also remember clearly that Genjo Marinello and some of his Sangha attended Sesshin while this woman cried her way through the entire week. She left a blasted hulk.

How Genjo can state that he had no clue that anything was remiss after having his pores opened by a week-long sit, yet be clear enough to be a teacher is an incongruity I will leave everyone to noodle with privately on their own. In the least, I think it makes his position on the ZSS Board untenable.

To be clear, I am not implying that Eido Roshi had anything to do with this woman, but clearly there was a weak atmosphere at DBZ where monks had no difficulty reconciling their precepts with using a woman as a receptacle for their spunk. This was Fuck Follies Part IV or V – I've lost count.

Second, the lynch mob mentality, and the anger, the hurt, must be let go. What is at stake is not just the future of the Zen Studies Society, but also the future of the Dharma in North America.

I do agree that ZSS has to ABSOLUTELY clean house, and should take Jiro up on his offer to help. Jiro has probably done more for DBZ than anyone except the Carlsons and Bill Johnstone, and I have always had great admiration for his integrity, his actions, and capabilities. I also will do whatever I can do to help.

In the vein of cleaning house, I also seriously question whether Shinge Sherry Chayat, who is woven into this sad tale from almost the very beginning, is really an appropriate choice to lead the 1,400 acres into the future. By virtue of association, the appearance of squeaky clean is not there. Perhaps Denko, Jiro, Zenshin, Zenrin – all human beings with their individual quirks – would be cleaner choices to move forward – of course, that is assuming any of them would be willing to play Act II. This brings me to the following.
November 21, 2010 5:55 PM

David said...

Part II

The Board, while taking decisive action, needs to move mindfully through this minefield, and not risk doing something stupidly and in haste. Suon, this means you. There are a number of moves I think the Board needs to take to come out of this on both the moral and legal high ground, to restore credibility to the institution and to develop a culture of transparency. Put another way, as Jiro mentioned in one of his letters, to remove your heads from the sand.

First, I recommend that the Board be seated with individuals who are squeaky clean.

Second, I recommend expanding the size of the Board to include outside Directors from other institutions.

Third, the bylaws need to be changed so that the Abbot (and Former Abbot, if ever reappointed) have either non-voting positions on the board or in the least can never be Director, Treasurer, or any other position of power. The Abbot should be entirely focused on the practice and his/her students.

Fourth, a suggestion I made to the Board in 1996 that fell on deaf ears at the time, ZSS/DBZ/SBJ should annually publish their financials like any other good non-profit – Hozo-san is an expert in this area, and can help the Board through the not-for-profit territory and requirements.

Why all of this? Transparency and credibility need to be re-established. I have donated to ZSS for the past fifteen years and, I, for one, would like to know where my donations are going.

A comment to a former ZSS Board member who commented, sarcastically, that no rape had occurred here. Sorry to bust your bubble, but if a victim is not in a mental state from which to grant consent (e.g., intoxication, in a subordinated power relationship with the abuser, unconscious, etc.), then it is assault. I say this, in addition to my suggestions to the Board, because those 1,400 acres, plus East 69th Street are going to look mighty attractive to attorneys looking for damages.

This is where I come back to the fact that the aim of clearing up this whole mess should be to protect the Dharma in North America and, as a subset of that, to protect ZSS, Kongo-ji, and Shobo-ji. And this is where I ask that all of you looking for blood to quench your anger, to stop and think how you can very easily alter and possibly destroy this very fragile transmission from Rinzai and Dogen to our continent.

This is a sad state of affairs. My teacher has been impeached, and more importantly, the North American Sangha is in great discord.

There are many victims here – in fact, everyone is a victim. Besides the damage of the assaults, there is an even bigger damage that the Board can help partially heal. All these denials have the impact of making victims feel crazy or wrong because people are telling

them either it didn't happen, or they asked for it, or other forms of mind manipulation. This is the ongoing emotional damage that victims carry for their lives.

If Zen Studies Society came entirely clean, took the recommendations of some of the more astute people in this forum, this alone would help the healing process for the victims. The feeling of being "crazy," would then have a way to reconcile itself with the true reality of the situation.

If the Board does not do this, then it is just twisting the knife once again in each of these victim's hearts, and by this action, the Board becomes an enabler and extender of the pain felt by everyone in this situation.

So, do the right thing. Be adults. Let us all look for reconciliation and drop the lynch mob mentality, so that these teachings may root more deeply in our soil.

Finally, let us feel gratitude for all those who have come before us. While it is the name of a song, this Unbroken Chain must continue – particularly due to the shape the world is in today.

With Heart,

Tenshin D.S Hill
November 21, 2010 5:56 PM

Anonymous said...

I'm back from a long weekend of more "non-violent direct actions" around mountain-top coal removal mining which is an environmental nightmare in Appalachia. We were actually celebrating major policy changes on the part of a major bank financing MTR.

I can't help making some parallels between the efforts to stop MTR and the efforts here to stop Shimano and clear the existing leadership that is too emeshed to be directly in charge of ZSS and real change.

First, letters are written, petitions made, meetings held with organizations to supposedly support and guide change. When none of that works, the next stage can appear to be very uncivilized. A man stands alone in front of a huge machine, signs yell out requests to stop.

Archival information continues to appear here and expressions of frustration are not pushed away. I'm also grateful for this as another person has commented. It's also called truth, all of it, and making it public. It's the real stuff that Buddhism does not turn away from.

This is not a lynch mob. This is the result of years of what we're reading and of what many have directly experienced. There has been no change that is close to acceptable. There has been no offer of real heart-felt restorative assistance to victims.

Lynch mobs historically kill innocent people. Tenshin, your letter is very powerful and eloquent. However, I ask that you rethink framing these efforts beyond the ordinary "civilized appeals" as lynch mob behavior.

Tenshin, I have a similar background and I am also a victim of Eido Shimano. Like you my history has caused me to dig deeply into myself and also understand the "environment" that allows a Shimano to exist. What I can tell you is that if there was any "lynch mob" experience, it was the experience of being silenced and obliterated by Shimano and the board at that time. That nearly killed me, a creative and gifted young woman who was vulnerable at the wrong time and in the wrong place.

What actions do you suggest for real change and restoration that has not been tried? Reconciliation is a result of these steps and in that order.

Thank you for your letter. It has real beauty.
November 22, 2010 2:56 AM

David said...

Anonymous (Nov-22, 2:56AM),

Thanks for your letter. I read it and wonder whether we know each other.

I was not entirely clear, you are correct, in my references to lynch mobs. I do not in any way think the process, up-to-now, has shown any of that group hysteria mentality. I was referring to avoiding the slippery slope of falling into a lynch mob mentality.

I apologize for the misunderstanding, because you are correct, the Board and institution were the only ones lynching people - those who raised questions and concerns.

I deeply feel for your having been through this. These are real wounds you have suffered, wounds that destroy in a way our most precious possession, which is basic trust in the universe or dharma or whatever you want to call it. At least, for me, that has been my personal struggle for my 40+ years.

and I am so very sorry you have had to endure this for god knows how long. Crazy silence, crazy denial. As any good therapist will tell you, predators are almost like viruses in their ability to lock and key into the weak areas of what they see as prey. This is narcissism - the ability to morph into the perfect analogue to entice the behavior they want from their victims. I experienced it this way, albeit at 8-10 years of age. They are oh so clever. They are also the most difficult psychological disorder to treat.

So, again, my regrets for not being clear. I in no way think anyone has acted in a disrespectful manner (apart from the Board of ZSS), and no lynch mob mentality has been raised. I just worry about things spiraling out of control.

To deal with this, I read a slug of Ikyu's poetry last night going to bed, including skeletons. His words ring clear as a bell almost 700 years later.

As for actions and change... If the Board is unwilling or unable to hand the reigns over to a bunch of independants who will make change happen, they will remain stuck and very legally vulnerable. If need be, then the big stick of both the criminal courts and the legal system have to be considered as options. The Board has the choice: they can go down in flames and likely loose their assets (imagine DBZ turning into a development, which is where it was headed 40 years ago), Eido Roshi could potentially face jail time if enough victims come forward or the Board can care about the Dharma and the Sangha, recluse itself, and appoint new members who are not under anyone's sway.

Your are correct, this is the only way reconciliation will happen. Transparency, an end to crazy silence and crazy denial, a beginning to merge perception back to reality, and hopefully a time to move toward recondiliation.

Let's remember, first-and-foremost, DBZ is really Sensaki-san and Soen's vision. Don't we want that to continue?

Back in the 1990s the Board set up a very generous pension fund at Nomura for the Shimanos, and one suggestion would be for that fund to be used to cover all therapy costs (past and future) for all those who are victims. I also suggest that a plaque be mounted in the Founder's hall with the names (or the name anonymous) of each and every victim, so that the magnitude of what sounds like serial sexual predation can be truly understood.

I also recommend ZSS do what what the ancient Venitiens did with their one single traitor - his name and portrait along the (I'm going to spell this incorrectly, sorry) top wall of the Dulce Palace, were painted over in black paint once his betrayels were uncovered. This, to this day, has struck me as the most powerful statement about someone's wrong doing - to make them forgotten. To erase them, in a sense, from the Lineage.

Please take care of yourself. Kobutsu has my email address, if the link doesn't work, and I invite anyone to contact me directly if there is anything I can do to help. (I don't post it here because I try to avoid spam, not because I am hiding it.)

Thanksgiving approaches.

-Tenshin

November 22, 2010 9:59 AM

Anonymous said...

Thank-you, it is heartening to read your words.
November 24, 2010 12:05 PM

Anonymous said...

For those of you who are inclined to take the proactive step of writing to Ryutaku-Ji concerning Shimano's official Dharma heir status, Kobutsu Malone has an useful template up here:

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20101206_Malone_Goto.pdf
December 6, 2010 3:44 AM

Anonymous said...

As an off and on student/member at Zen Studies Society since the 80s, rumors of accusations were overheard in the back rooms but never from senior students, so the recent events, news, commentaries and archives have been revelatory. I have been very disappointed by the Board's lack of transparency, its avoidance of any public membership meetings on these accusations and issues. I am also very uncomfortable with the rush to install Shinge-shitsu Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi as abbot without any membership input. I also concur with comments made in this blog that she needs to address the questions raised about a relationship with Shimano before she becomes the new DBZ abbot? We should not move forward with the legacy of "fruit from a tainted tree", we need a honest foundation of truth, transparency and open governance.

December 14, 2010 8:53 PM

Zogen said...

Excerpts from An Open Letter to The Directors of Zen Studies Society.

Dear Directors of The Zen Studies Society,

I want to add my voice to the on-going discussion of your recent choices and the long history of the abuse of power by the titular leader of Zen Studies Society, Eido Shimano Roshi. This most recent prolonged surge of indignation, and moral revulsion, brings to the fore the decades-long history of suppressed instances of unacceptable behavior by your Teacher and, it reveals an astonishing degree of complacency demonstrated, and continued in evidence, by all of you.

You, and your many predecessors, understandably, were, and are still, reluctant to confront your beloved Teacher, let alone condemn and remove him. No one among us, lay practitioners, can imagine what it might be like to do that. After all, your own most intimate experiences of practice and memories of Dharma teachings, are forever bound with your Roshi. Some of you have more intimate memories, associated with him, and derive your authority from Zen training, ordination and, for some of you, Dharma Transmission received from Eido Shimano Roshi. Existing "official" structures, i.e.

statutory and procedural, "lock" you into a "loyalty trap", leaving not much space between acquiescence and withdrawal.

Your position is no less than tragic -- even more so now, when "all" has been exposed on the world-wide web. But, your Teacher's position is no less tragic than yours: Eido Shimano Roshi systematically destroyed everything he wanted, originally, to create and, compromised everything he was entrusted to keep and protect. His reputation, as a practicing Buddhist Teacher and Abbot, is gone; the standing of The Zen Studies Society within the American Buddhist community has been destroyed; all donors, and most of the former supporters-- any possibility of financial support from them is gone. ZSS "membership" is a sham; and, the first Buddhist Monastery, created de novo in America, stands essentially empty.

For the full text of this letter, go to:

http://www.sanghaconvergence.org/DATA/20101216_Zogen_ZSS.pdf
December 18, 2010 3:25 AM

Anonymous said...

From a recent post to the Shimanoarchive:

“I was assigned to the position of Assistant Jisha at the beginning of the first 7-day sesshin of Dai Bosatsu's first kessei. This was also my first 7-day sesshin, My entire intention for that first sesshin was to experience kensho. I was sitting very diligently and with tremendous effort toward this goal. After the last sitting on the sixth day, Roshi asked me to meet with him in his study. I assumed (hoped) this had to do with jisha work, but when we sat [kneeled] at the table, he produced a large book of photographs of nude women. He said that a student had recently sent it to him, and proceeded to flip through the pages. He said, "This one is really not so bad," and showed me the photo of a nude young woman straddling a chair backwards. I said, "I think I should go now," and he asked, "Why?" and then clasped my hand. I didn't argue with him - I just stood up and left. The following day, I told him that his behavior was likely to trigger another scandal.”

“Despite this, Eido made It very clear that he was patiently waiting for me to relent, and he made several more passes. In dokusan In the middle of my second sesshin, he told me that I had a "special karma," and I was so naive and so committed to practice that I took this to mean I would be his dharma heir. When I realized, and he confirmed, that it meant I was destined to be his lover, I was emotionally and psychologically devastated. I know that Eido labels his accusers as mentally unstable, but actions like this can hardly do otherwise than to destabilize otherwise healthy but koan-stressed and sleep-deprived students in the middle of a Rinzai Zen sesshin. I was never able to complete a sesshin after that. For me, the experience of being diverted from my path and de-valued as a serious Zen student has had a lifelong impact on my relationship with Zen Buddhism. I do not trust Buddhist teachers of any sect, What I mean by this is that I understand that

sexual attractions are part of human nature and that, without very clear and enforceable rules prohibiting teacher-student liaisons in Buddhist practice, this corrosive interaction is likely to play itself out again and again and again. It seems a shame that the standards that psychologists and university professors and lawyers are bound to (and the beneficial atmosphere these standards create), are beyond the scope and reach of so many Buddhist organizations.”

December 22, 2010 9:02 AM

Anonymous said...

Copied and posted here from Genkaku-again.

The following statement comes from Merry White Benezra (Nennen), a one-time student of Mr. Shimano's. I have retyped it from its pdf original, so any typos are my mistake. It was not addressed to me, but Merry sent me a copy saying I was free to post it.

PART I

December 17, 2010

I was a resident and kessei student at Dai Bosatsu Zendo from September 1976 to Febtuary 1977. You asked me to describe my experience of sexual harassment by Eido Roshi.

I was new to Zen practice when I became a DBZ kessei student September 1976, having attended Thursday night zazen in the city on a very sporadic basis over the previous few years, and having also stayed at DBZ as a guest/work student for the last two weeks of July 1976. I returned to DBZ in September 1976 for the kessei in a very serious refuge-taking state of mind.

Although I had been warned by Adam Fisher (when we were both summer guest students at DBZ in late July 1976) that there had been a scandal the previous year, it sounded to me as though the problem was that Eido had taken more than one (willing) lover but had not told any of his lovers that their relationships were not exclusive -- and then as some point they all found out about each other. I had no interest in being a lover of Eido Roshi's -- I had had enough of married lover when I showed up, and my intention was to me in the exact opposite direction toward sexual abstinence. Nor did Eido strike me as an appealing lover. When he made his initial and rather subtle advances, I did not encourage him.

I was assigned to the position of Assistant Jisha at the beginning of the first 7-day sesshin of Dai Bosatsu's first kessei. This was also my first 7-day sesshin. My entire intention for that first sesshin was to experience kensho. I was sitting very diligently and with tremendous effort toward this goal. After the last sitting on the sixth day, Roshi asked me to meet with him in his study.

December 18, 2010 8:23 AM

December 22, 2010 6:11 PM

Anonymous said...

Nennen, PART II

I assumed (hoped) this had to do with jisha work, but when we sat (kneeled) at the table, he produced a large book of photographs of nude women. He said that a student had recently sent it to him, and proceeded to flip through the pages. He said, "This one is really not so bad," and showed me the photo of a nude young woman straddling a chair backwards. I said, "I think I should go now," and he asked, "Why?" and then clasped my hand. I didn't argue with him-- I just stood up and left. The following day, I told him that his behavior was likely to trigger another scandal.

Despite this, Eido mad it very clear that he was patiently waiting for me to relent, and he mad several more passes. In dokusan in the middle of my second sesshin, he told me that I had a "special karma," and I was so naive and so committed to practice that I took this

to mean I would be his dharma heir. When I realized, and he confirmed, that it meant I was destined to be his lover, I was emotionally and psychologically devastated. I know that Eido labels his accusers as mentally unstable, but actions like this can hardly do otherwise than to destabilize otherwise healthy but koan-stressed and sleep-deprived students in the middle of a Rinzai Zen sesshin. I was never able to complete a sesshin after that.

For me, the experience of being diverted from my path and de-valued as a serious Zen student has had a lifelong impact on my relationship with Zen Buddhism. I do not trust Buddhist teachers of any sort. What I mean by this is that I understand that sexual attractions are part of human nature and that, without very clear and enforceable rules prohibiting teacher-student liaisons in Buddhist practice, this corrosive interaction is likely to play itself out again and again and again. It seems a shame that the standards of psychologists and university professors and lawyers are bound to (and the beneficial atmosphere these standards create), are beyond the scope and reach of so many Buddhist organizations.

December 18, 2010 8:26 AM

December 22, 2010 6:14 PM

Olivia said...

I just discovered that there is such a thing as Bloggisatva Awards given each year - no idea for how long it's been happening.

The winner - ready for this? - for the post of the year was NellaLou's (Marnie Froberg)"Sex and the Sangha: Forgiveness, Retribution or Justice"

<http://enlightenmentward.wordpress.com/2010/06/02/sex-and-the-sanghaforgiveness-retribution-or-justice/>

Unless I'm confusing this, NellaLou also won the category for Best-Engage-the-World blog for her Smiling Buddha Cabaret. You can also read here what she does with this award. Give's it away!

<http://enlightenmentward.wordpress.com/>

As I was scrolling this Bloggisatva site there was a new category that just started this year -- Bloggisatva Lifetime Achievement Award - and the winner is Robert Aitken Roshi.

Congratulations Nellalou, and thank you Aitken Roshi.

And thank you Tom Aitken for administering this site to which there's a link from the Bloggisatva Award.

ps (initially I was "Joy" on this site.)
December 22, 2010 8:25 PM

Anonymous said...

Hello everyone,

I may have posted this information on the wrong blog posting, so I am posting it here as well for folks benefit.

It looks like that apology Eido gave was a hollow one, one of the newer additions to the Shimano Archive is a letter dated December 1st, 2010 and signed Eido Shimano was sent to the New York Times... He denies EVERYTHING..:(

http://www.shimanoarchive.com/PDFs/20101201_Shimano_NYT.pdf

Here is an excerpt:

""I do not want this article and my retirement to be linked. One has nothing to do with the other - there is no cause and effect."

"When I returned to the United States, many people brought this article to my attention. The effect has been profound. Many people are hurt and confused. As an aside, minutes from our Board of Directors meetings are private documents. If they wound up in Hawaii or in Mark Oppenheimer's possession, they were improperly obtained andor delivered. Did anyone question why Mr. Aitken would write about a Buddhist monk for 50 years, when I have had contact with him only twice since 1964? I shall look forward to hear what your journalist, Mark Oppenheimer. has to say about the contents of my letter.'

Sorry to be the herald of this unfortunate news.

December 26, 2010 7:51 AM

Brian said...

Perhaps now he will deny ever writing the unsigned original text email? That's it, he'll pick up the shining shield of righteousness and the sword that cuts through delusion and set the whole world right. What a wonderful ending to such a touching story of one poor monk, all alone in New York City, who lovingly brought Zen to America.

And the "private documents" revealing multiple violations of the precepts and clerical fiduciary responsibility are "private" and "None of your business."

December 28, 2010 11:46 AM

Bibashi Sonja said...

After reading the eleven new postings (post-Ford) on the Archive, I'm astonished at how few (except for 2 or 3 of those letters) have to do w/ the actual problem at ZSS, but instead are Genjo and Roko puff-pieces concealed in the context of dealing with the problem. I mean, wake the frack up, folks!

Is the American Sangha so fracking naive as to take these, which are essentially form letters, as compassionate support from "teachers" to correct a wrong? (Kensei Koji hit it on the mark in his letter.)

First, where were these wise folks months or years ago? Kobutsu, Genkaku, and a few others have been beating this drum for quite a while, yet those who drafted these form letters on the eve of an abbot's installation could not raise their concerns earlier?

Second, it's all the same delusional, self-promotional crap that got ZSS into the mess it finds itself. You "teachers" dressed in your finest, parade around talking about "it." You are just bags of bones playing out the night of a thousand knives.

An old friend who is a student of Pema's recently told me not to worry, that Buddhism is not dead. You know what? She's right. Chodran teaches, and literally thousands of people listen. Her practice is alive and is also not devoid of a human or moral center.

Again, I am drawn back to Ikyu's Skeletons. Over-and-over, through the past few months it keeps pulling me back.

Except for a very few gems, institutionalized Zen in North America is showing itself to be lame or just plain dead. Now I know why my cushion sits alone.

Oy,

-Tenshin-

January 3, 2011 12:27 PM

Witness said...

It is encouraging to see the recent letters to the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors from prominent teachers in the American Zen community.

These are letters from seasoned teachers who know what it means to be responsible for an organization, to serve on a board, and who are aware of the responsibilities that sit on the individual shoulders of each Director.

It is a challenge to serve on the Zen Studies Society Board of Directors and to maintain an unconflicted conscience. In good times the Board can be a friendly, collegial group. In bad times, when yet another case of sexual abuse is reported and Mr. Shimano is fighting for power, it can become a loathesome and macabre experience.

The recent letters of support from these respected teachers are extremely useful in helping each Board member to understand their individual responsibilities, to recognize their personal autonomy, and to clear their minds of the pressures of undue influence.

...

Here is a letter to a former ZSS Director during the sexual abuse problems of 1993, from Philip Kapleau, Roshi:

...

4322 Lincoln St.
Hollywood, FL 33021

August 13, 1993

Dear [director],

Let me say, first of all, that I appreciate the confidence you displayed in my judgement by taking up with me the subject of our lengthy conversation. As I promised, I am phoning the Rochester Zen Center to send you a copy of the Spring/Summer, 1993 issue of ZEN BOW, rather than asking them simply to send you the special supplement which contains Bodhin Sensei's report of the Dharamsala conference with the Dalai Lama. Because this particular issue is outstanding for many reasons, I'm asking the receptionist to send you the entire issue, which, as I have said, contains the special supplement.

After you have read it and feel I can help you in any way with the problem you and your associates are facing, don't hesitate to let me know.

Permit me to stress one thing: please, please do not despair and resign, as three or four previous boards have done. If you and your associates seriously assume the responsibilities that you are empowered by law to assume and act as you feel you should act in the interest of your immediate sangha, you will earn the respect and gratitude not

only of your immediate sangha but earn the gratitude of the larger sangha that, inevitably, is painted with the same brush of corruption that is now tearing your own sangha apart.

Your task, I know, is not an easy one; on the other hand, neither is it an impossible one. My best wishes for your success go with this letter. Again, anything I can do to help, I will be glad to do.

Warmly,
[signed]

Philip Kapleau
January 4, 2011 5:40 AM

Zogen said...
January 16, 2010

An open letter to The Directors of Zen Studies Society.
From : Zogen

Dear Directors of The Zen Studies Society,

There has been a noticeable increase in comments on still-secret deliberations of the Board of Directors of Zen Studies Society. Reported comments, from a concerned maha-Sangha, and a lack of constructive action or proposals, suggest that the Board continues to be "stuck" in its tragically ambivalent & timid position. Meanwhile, public comment & outcry continue to grow & spread. The "price" to ZSS reputation & impact on its future continue to mount. The Board, however, ignores this discrepancy, in a sense of urgency, & drifts further & further away from growing consensus among Teachers & practitioners. One can easily imagine the hurt & anger of those whose life & practice of Dharma had been affected by Eido Shimano Roshi's conduct & complacency of ZSS Board of Directors.

The following are some of the immediate risks facing the Board, and the former & current Abbot of ZSS:

1) Legal liabilities -

- Individual or group appeal, for relief & redress, to NYS Court system. This will be a public filing (no minors were ever involved) & that will extend the reach of this growing scandal. Because of jurisdictional requirements, Dai Bosatsu Zendo' neighbors in Sullivan County, NY will become part of the audience. Most likely, damages will be sought & may be levied on ZSS.
- A similar, in content, Complaint may be filed within NYC Court

system.

This will result in the same consequences as above. ZSS resources are inadequate to confront even one, let alone two, legal challenges.

- Responders to these claims will be named in public documents & will include Eido Shimano Roshi & members of ZSS Board of Directors (past & present). Even an attempted filing will generate another wave of unfavorable publicity.

- A Complaint (non-criminal) may be filed with the Office of Secretary of State of the State of New York, Internal Revenue Service & Probate Court (all bequests to ZSS can be examined in the light of this Complaint). This Complaint will challenge the former Abbot & the Board on their failure to carry out their fiduciary responsibility to founders & former supporters.

- All such initiatives will bring about one, or another, form of injunction & will interfere with ZSS activities. In particular, Eido Shimano Roshi's "retirement package" will be blocked or revoked & will be examined by relevant authorities. These, quite likely & possible

Unfiled Notes Page 1

be examined by relevant authorities. These, quite likely & possible consequences will further jeopardize (morally, legally & financially) Zen Studies Society & its future.

2) Other looming liabilities -

- Some of the Board members are ordained Teachers & Dharma heirs. Can we imagine that this scandal will leave their personal reputations & teaching authority intact? What will be the reaction of their students to their protracted inaction?

- Major Japanese newspapers & TV and cable networks have representative offices in NYC & Washington, DC. Many Japanese practitioners follow our Buddhist blogs & foreign Rinzai community is monitoring our torment & turmoil. Should we risk facing ostracism not only in the US but abroad too? Should we risk compromising these connections, which are quite tenuous to begin with (former Abbot controlled them entirely for his own benefit)?

- And, finally, what is the rate of "attrition", how many potential & former Sangha members have we lost already, because of this conduct of the Board of Directors of ZSS?

Please consider this "risk assessment" as a plea to a considered discussion & a determined action.

Gassho,

Zogen

January 16, 2011 3:12 PM

CSSF said...

A group of former ZSS sangha members have been communicating over the past several months. We felt it was important to deal openly, and in a safe, supportive environment, with the pain Eido Shimano's choices have caused so many of us. For this reason we have organized a facilitated meeting in NYC on Sunday, March 20th from 9 am to 5 pm.

Please visit the web page (www.sanghasteppingforth.com) for more detailed information and join us on the 20th if you feel that this meeting may be beneficial for you.

Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth (CSSF)
February 15, 2011 6:53 AM

CSSF said...

The Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth has an update on the facilitators for the March 20th meeting in NYC.

The meeting will now be co-facilitated by Barry Magrid and Grace Schireson.

For more details, please check our web site:
<http://www.sanghasteppingforth.com/>

Thank you.
February 27, 2011 7:52 AM

Kobutsu said...

decision about whether and how to participate in this event is informed by some very important considerations of which you may not previously have been aware.”

* * *

I'm not an attorney, and can't give a legal opinion, but it certainly seems like the envisioned lawsuit is not based solely on sexual misconduct and the cautions are well worth considering.
March 13, 2011 6:41 AM

Anonymous said...

This is a statement by sixteen former and current members of the ZSS Sangha who met together for a meeting on Sunday March 20, 2011, facilitated by Grace Schireson and Barry Magid.

While acknowledging the many positive and beneficial experiences of practice we have taken a first step toward healing from fifty years of trauma caused by misconduct by Eido Shimano and have begun the process of recognizing and assessing our own sense of responsibility for the silence and inaction that allowed this to continue for so long.

We all shared our love for Zen practice and the acute sense of pain and loss of community. We wish to extend our compassion to all those who have suffered and were deeply damaged by this ongoing trauma.

Some of the topics we explored during the day were:

- The difference between submission and surrender
- The mystery of enlightenment coinciding with misconduct
- The mystique and idealization of a teacher and practice
- What fantasies might have brought us to Zen practice and how we might better activate our bullshit detectors in the future
- Power dynamics
- Sexual dynamics in unequal power situations
- Spiritual bypassing – when our practice disconnects us from our emotional life and psychological needs

We expressed concern about how the process of reconstruction of the ZSS will unfold and the need for a democratic Sangha-driven process moving forward that is not principally controlled by the existing hierarchy.

All of us who participated feel that we benefited a great deal from discussing these issues openly and honestly. And we invite others to join us in the next meeting, date to be determined.

We ask the greater Buddhist community for its continuing support and compassion as we move through this painful process.

Participants of the Sangha Stepping Forth Meeting
Our website: <http://sanghasteppingforth.com>

For questions or comments you can email us at:
cssf@sanghasteppingforth.com
March 23, 2011 10:09 PM

Groundhog Day said...

A film was made in 1993 called "Groundhog Day"; it is about an egocentric TV weatherman who finds himself repeating the same day over and over again, until he gets it right.

In a similar vein, the Zen Studies Society in New York has had the same meeting over and over again since 1967. And the topic of these meetings has been this: Eido Tai

Shimano is a serial sexual predator and a sociopathic liar who seems incapable of not abusing power, and institutions are trying to figure out how to protect the public and themselves.

The meetings are a repetition of meetings held by Robert Aitken in Hawaii and Japan in 1964. And I really must believe that they are a repetition of meetings that began in Japan in the 1950's or even the 1940's. Mr. Shimano was born in 1932.

These meetings were repeated again in New York (the same offender, but new victims) starting in 1967 and again in the 1970s and the 1980s and the 1990s and the 2000s; and in 2009, 2010 and 2011, it is safe to say that similar meetings have been held in Switzerland, Japan, California, Washington, Maine, Hawaii, Seattle, Syracuse, Livingston Manor, and Manhattan, at a bare minimum.

It is critical to write down minutes at these meetings. The lack of documentation protects no one except those who should be held accountable. Minutes are not quotes; they can be a simple list of unattributed statements that reflect the sequence of thoughts at the meeting.

There was yet another meeting in New York on Sunday, March 20, 2011, organized by former ZSS students, the Committee for Sangha Stepping Forth CSSF. The attendees at the meeting were both past and present ZSS students, and a summary of the meeting (instead of minutes) was issued by the CSSF.

In the spirit of Groundhog Day, I compared the '2011 CSSF Summary' against the '1993 ZSS Women's Meeting Minutes' (shimanoarchive.com). For the benefit of people who have never had the experience of attending such a meeting with students of the Zen Studies Society, I thought that it might be informative to take the 2011 CSSF Summary (a 1 day meeting), and to insert the participants' statements from the 1993 ZSS Women's Workshop Minutes (a 2 day meeting).

The 2011 CSSF summary remarks are preceded by parentheses (cssf), and they are followed by the 1993 Women's minutes remarks, which are set off in quotation marks. I inserted 1993 remarks where it seemed to me that they might fit into the 2011 summary, but please feel free to move the statements around.

And while this exercise does not address the serious deceptions of the past year, it's Groundhog Day and once again we have an opportunity to get it right.

...

Part One (cssf 2011) / "ZSS women 1993"

(cssf) This is a statement by sixteen former and current members of the ZSS Sangha who met together for a meeting on Sunday March 20, 2011, facilitated by Grace Schireson and Barry Magid.

(cssf) While acknowledging the many positive and beneficial experiences of practice we have taken a first step toward healing from fifty years of trauma caused by misconduct by Eido Shimano

"-The scandals have been destructive to the Sangha and to individuals.

-The mass exodus of people in 1967, 1975, 1979, 1982, 1986 and 1993 has caused a loss of extremely talented people and very few senior students remain."

(cssf) and have begun the process of recognizing and assessing our own sense of responsibility for the silence and inaction that allowed this to continue for so long.

"-There has been the illusion that silence would make everything all right."

(cssf) We all shared our love for Zen practice and the acute sense of pain and loss of community.

"-The scandals have hurt everyone - not just women."

(continued in Part Two)

March 24, 2011 6:53 AM

Groundhog Day said...

Part Two (cssf 2011) / "ZSS women 1993"

(cssf) We wish to extend our compassion to all those who have suffered and were deeply damaged by this ongoing trauma.

"-People are dismayed about Eido Roshi's apparent view that members can easily be replaced and feel he does little to try to heal the wounds that have been created.

-Telling people to 'get out' when they don't agree with him is arrogant and unacceptable.

-Many of the women who have been involved with Roshi have been traumatized by the experience-some for years.

-Roshi doesn't seem to have been adversely affected by these relationships but the women have been.

-Roshi doesn't perceive himself as having a problem.

-Eido Roshi won't change his behavior to correct the problem. He refuses to take responsibility for his actions."

(cssf) Some of the topics we explored during the day were:

(cssf) • The difference between submission and surrender

"-The argument that there is nothing to judge/no one to judge [in the unconditional realm] has been used to justify abusive behavior."

(cssf) • The mystery of enlightenment coinciding with misconduct

"-What is the demarcation between 'ignorant' v. 'enlightened' behavior?

-Roshi's [sexual] advances toward women are indicative of emotional immaturity, thoughtlessness, and insecurity."

(cssf) • The mystique and idealization of a teacher and practice

"-Zen is loaded with exotic cultural trappings.

-This creates a great deal of confusion, especially among newer students, because they may not know what is appropriate within the context of the practice.

-All of the ritual etc. used in Zen causes a further separation of the teacher from his/her students.

-The Japanese model can be used as a vehicle to abuse power by an 'unscrupulous' teacher. Dokusan is an example.

-Japanese culture has a tremendous impact on the practice. American students consider this a problem but Roshi and Aiho-san [Mr. and Mrs. Shimano] don't.

-There is a need to abandon idealism.

-Teaching comes in amazing forms. Some have learned more from Roshi's mistakes than his triumphs.

-Students (especially new ones) are vulnerable-many view a Zen master as a 'godlike' being who would never consciously hurt anyone. They trust such an individual implicitly.

[Mr. Shimano is a Priest and Abbot.]

-No one is aware of any instances where Roshi propositioned a woman-was turned down and then refused to continue being her teacher. [Women leave instead, and never return.]"

(cssf) • What fantasies might have brought us to Zen practice and how we might better activate our bullshit detectors in the future

"-One can be enlightened yet not actualize certain behavior.

-There is a problem with unenlightened people telling others what to do.

-Roshi's behavior and lifestyle do not epitomize that of a Buddhist priest.

-Perhaps Roshi displayed [sexually abusive] 'affection' towards certain women because he felt they needed some warmth and/or kindness in their lives.

-Is it possible to surmise the nature of behavior by looking at the end results of a person's actions?

-Roshi is a lonely person and his whole lifestyle (ie; traveling constantly etc.) is very hard on him. [and therefore he abuses people]

-The argument that there is nothing to judge/no one to judge [in the unconditional realm] has been used to justify abusive behavior."

(continued in Part Three)

March 24, 2011 6:55 AM

Goundhog Day said...

Part Three (cssf 2011) / "ZSS women 1993"

(cssf) • Power dynamics

"-Soen Roshi [Mr. Shimano's teacher in Japan] felt there were problems with Eido Roshi but even he couldn't affect any change in his behavior

-Roshi has engaged in other behavioral patterns, such as deception, which have also caused tremendous hurt and pain.

- Roshi has the reputation of being untrustworthy and manipulative. This has also been a 'turn off' for some people.
- Roshi has not been a leader. He refused to prevent Junpo [Vice Abbot Dennis Kelly] from engaging in certain types of unacceptable behavior.
- Zen is very patriarchal-all of the real power rests with men. Women are not treated as equals and are under-represented in the power hierarchy.
- Student-teacher [sexual] liaison incidents would be less common if there were more women Roshis.
- The Ethical Conduct Guidelines enacted by the Board were the best thing that's happened to the organization in a long time.
- These Guidelines should be read as part of sesshin cautions at both DBZ and Shobo-ji.
- Add more teachers so that Roshi is not the only person who trains students.
- Have sesshins with Roshi not present.
- Roshi has to be willing to learn from his students. He refuses to 'grow.'
- Suggesting any reform/improvement could be interpreted by Roshi as a lack of gratitude and/or trying to remove his power.
- Roshi sometimes misjudges people and their motives.
- A lot of people have some/a lot of fear of Roshi as well as Aiho-san [Mrs. Shimano].
- Roshi is isolated from his students and has too much power.
- Roshi and Aiho-san [Mr. and Mrs. Shimano] do not want students to talk to each other. They want a 'veil of secrecy' to surround everything.
- Roshi and Aiho-san consider public discussions of the student-teacher [sexual] issue as a loss of face. [Embarrassing and shameful.]
- Roshi does not treat women differently from men."

(cssf) • Sexual dynamics in unequal power situations

- "-People want Roshi to 'stop it!'
- Roshi has a compulsive [sex] addiction that needs to be cured.
- Women who come to a Zen Studies Society facility should be warned in advance about Roshi.
- Junpo [Vice Abbot Dennis Kelly] also propositioned women but he was more open about it than Roshi was.
- Even if a woman does try to initiate a liaison, it is still Roshi's responsibility to not allow it to happen.
- In Japan the women monks are not allowed to marry-the males are. Any fraternizing between the sexes is monitored carefully by the jisha."

(cssf) • Spiritual bypassing – when our practice disconnects us from our emotional life and psychological needs

- "-Roshi has a compulsive [sex] addiction that needs to be cured."

(cssf) We expressed concern about how the process of reconstruction of the ZSS will unfold

- "-The Zen Studies Society has no long-term viability.

- The mass exodus of people in 1967, 1975, 1979, 1982, 1986 and 1993 has caused a loss of extremely talented people and very few senior students remain.
- [Vice Abbot Dennis Kelly] Junpo's behavior and his being made a dharma heir caused a lot of people to become disillusioned and angry. Many people didn't want to come back to DBZ as a result. Some people left the Sangha permanently.
- Regardless of what has happened some people still consider Roshi their teacher."

(continued in Part Four)

March 24, 2011 6:57 AM

Groundhog Day said...

Part Four (cssf 2011) / "ZSS women 1993"

(cssf) and the need for a democratic Sangha-driven process moving forward that is not principally controlled by the existing hierarchy.

- "-The group discussed the issue of fear.
- There is a total lack of trust within the organization that can't be easily cured.
- There is fear that nothing will change within the organization until Roshi retires/leaves. [In 2010, instead of firing Mr. Shimano, the Board arranged for his retirement with an egregious pension, and stuck the ZSS students and donors with the bill.]
- There is fear that nothing will come out of this workshop and/or our concerns will not be taken seriously.
- Some of the people who attended the workshop were asked how they had the courage to come.
- Why didn't all of the women at DBZ attend the workshop? [Only one resident attended.] Were they afraid of retribution from Roshi and/or Aiho-san [Mr. and Mrs. Shimano]?
- The Board needs to be more proactive. The Board has not stood up to Roshi enough.
- The Bylaws should be changed to make the Zen Studies Society more democratic. It is currently an autocratic organization where no one has any say in what happens.
- People have heard Roshi say he wouldn't seduce women students again before and don't believe him anymore. They are afraid he will do it again.
- Some of the people who left would like to come back but can't because they do not feel safe and/or can't practice at a ZSS facility as long as teacher/student [sexual] relationships are allowed to happen,
- Others feel that so much had happened that they are not sure a reconciliation is possible."

(cssf) All of us who participated feel that we benefited a great deal from discussing these issues openly and honestly. And we invite others to join us in the next meeting, date to be determined. We ask the greater Buddhist community for its continuing support and compassion as we move through this painful process.

"-Some American Zen teachers have had problems with Roshi's behavior but they are really spread thin and there is not a well organized network to speak out against what has happened.

-American Zen has a horrible reputation because of sex, drug and money scandals."

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